

# PERSEPOLIS 2

THE STORY OF A RETURN



MARJANE SATRAPI



## CREDIT

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# PERSEPOLIS 2

MARJANE SATRAPI



PANTHEON



# THE SOUP

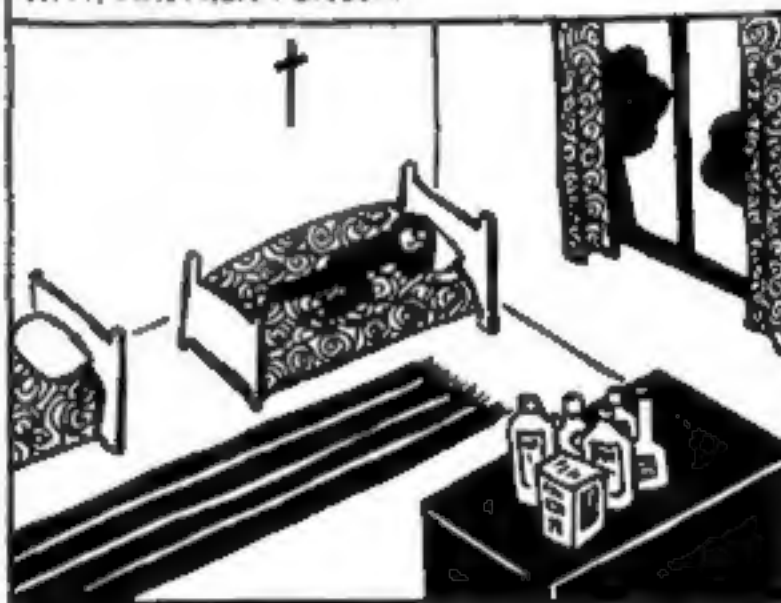
NOVEMBER 1984. I AM IN AUSTRIA. I HAD COME HERE WITH THE IDEA OF LEAVING A RELIGIOUS IRAN FOR AN OPEN AND SECULAR EUROPE AND THAT 2020, MY MOTHER'S BEST FRIEND, WOULD LOVE ME LIKE HER OWN DAUGHTER.



ONLY HERE I AM! SHE LEFT ME AT A BOARDING HOUSE RUN BY NUNS.



MY ROOM WAS SMALL, AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I HAD TO SHARE MY SPACE WITH ANOTHER PERSON.



I HADN'T MET HER YET. I ONLY KNEW THAT HER NAME WAS LUCIA.



I WONDERED WHAT SHE WOULD LOOK LIKE.



EUROPE, THE ALPS, SWITZERLAND, AUSTRIA... FROM THIS I DEDUCED THAT SHE WOULD BE LIKE HEIDI.



THIS WAS OKAY WITH ME. I REALLY LIKED HEIDI.



I HAD BEEN IN VIENNA ELEVEN DAYS. ZOZO AND HER DAUGHTER SHIRIN, WHOM I HAD KNOWN DURING MY CHILDHOOD, HAD COME TO GET ME AT THE AIRPORT.



SHIRIN WAS AS I REMEMBERED HER. HOWEVER, I DETECTED SOMETHING UNKIND IN THE LOOK HER MOTHER GAVE ME.



YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED MUCH WELL, YES! NOW YOU HAVE LONG HAIR!

YOU HAVEN'T EITHER YOU'RE THE SAME.



IT'S GOING TO BE COOL TO GO TO SCHOOL WITHOUT A VEIL, TO NOT HAVE TO BEAT ONESELF EVERY DAY FOR THE WAR MARTYRS...



HAVE YOU SEEN THESE? THEY'RE REALLY FASHIONABLE. THEY'RE TO PROTECT YOUR EARS FROM THE COLD. DO YOU WANT TO TRY THEM ON?

NO THANKS!



THIS IS MY RASPBERRY-SCENTED PEN, BUT I HAVE STRAWBERRY AND BLACKBERRY ONES, TOO.



DO YOU WANT TO PUT ON SOME LIPSTICK? I LOVE PEARLY PINK. IT'S VERY IN!!!

HMPHH...



WHAT A TRAITOR! WHILE PEOPLE WERE DYING IN OUR COUNTRY, SHE WAS TALKING TO ME ABOUT TRIVIAL THINGS.







AND AFTER THESE TEN DAYS...



OUR APARTMENT, AS  
YOU'VE NO DOUBT NOTICED,  
IS TOO SMALL. I FOUND YOU  
A BOARDING HOUSE IN A  
BEAUTIFUL PART OF  
VIENNA, NEAR RATHAUS.



IT'S RUN BY NUNS. THE  
MOTHER SUPERIOR AND  
SEVERAL OF THE SISTERS  
SPEAK FLUENT FRENCH.



WHEN DO  
WE GO?

RIGHT AWAY GO  
PACK YOUR BAG.



NUNS. I WAS ACQUAINTED WITH THEM. I WAS AT THE ÉCOLE  
JEANNE D'ARC\* IN TEHRAN. THE NUNS I ENCOUNTERED THERE  
WERE FEROCIOUS.

YOU'LL COME SEE US ON  
WEEKENDS. WE'LL GO ICE-  
SKATING

YEAH,  
YEAH.



DESPITE EVERYTHING, I WAS HAPPY TO LEAVE THEIR HOUSE. IN  
THIS WAY, I'D BE RID OF ZORO THE MEAN AND SHIRIN THE INANE.

\* JOAN OF ARC SCHOOL

THE ONLY ONE I WAS GOING TO  
MISS WAS HOUSHANG. I SAW IN  
HIM A PROTECTOR.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

YES, UNCLE HOUSHANG.



HE SAW IN ME AN ALLY.

OKAY! THAT'S ENOUGH.  
LET'S GO!



AND WE LEFT.





\*ALDI IS A SUPERMARKET AND LINKS MEANS LEFT IN GERMAN.



IT HAD BEEN FOUR YEARS SINCE I'D SEEN SUCH A WELL-STOCKED STORE.



THE FIRST AISLE I HEADED FOR WAS THE ONE WITH SCENTED DETERGENTS.



WE COULDN'T FIND THEM IN IRAN ANYMORE.



I FILLED THE CART WITH ALL KINDS OF PRODUCTS.



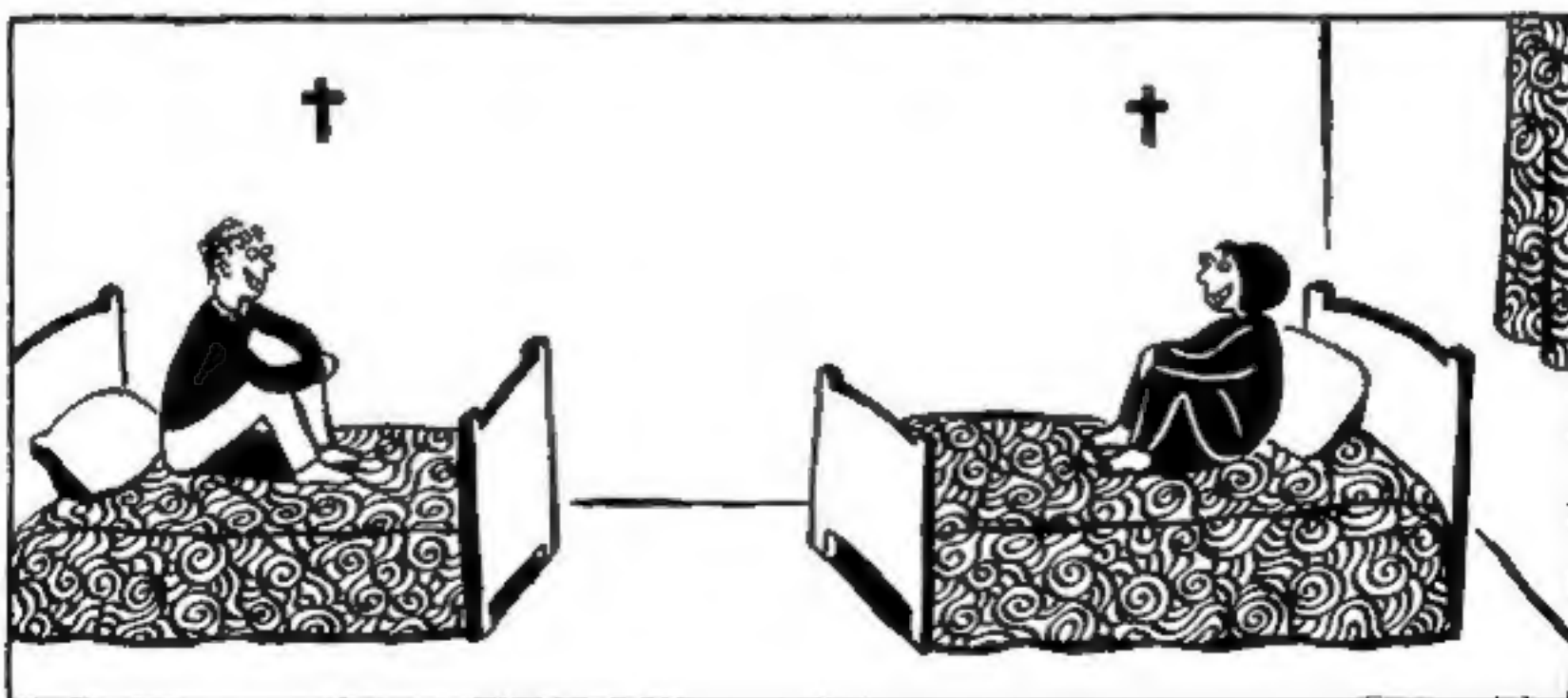
GIVEN MY RESTRICTED BUDGET, I TOOK TWO BOXES OF PASTA.



I HANDED OVER A 100 SHILLING BILL. LUCKILY, IT WAS ENOUGH, OTHERWISE I WOULD HAVE BEEN ASHAMED.









I OFFERED HER SOME OF THE PISTACHIOS I'D BROUGHT WITH ME, A PRESENT FROM MY UNCLE. THEY ARE A SPECIALTY OF IRAN THAT IS OFTEN GIVEN WHEN SOMEONE IS GOING ABROAD. WE CONSIDER OUR PISTACHIOS TO BE THE WORLD'S BEST.



AS WE CONSIDER MANY OF OUR THINGS TO BE

LUCIA MADE ME A KNORR SOUP, "CREAM OF MUSHROOM."



DIDN'T LIKE IT MUCH



MAGST DU FERNSEHEN?

FERNSEHEN?

FENS, FUNS,  
FENR,  
FENÊTRE...



\* WINDOW IN FRENCH.

FERNSEHEN?

NEIN! HI HI HI  
DAS IST FENSTER!



WARTE MAL!



DAS IST EIN FERNSEHEN.

AH TV!  
IT'S THE SAME  
THING.



TV!

FERNSEHEN.  
YA! YA!  
FERNSEHEN!



I WAS HAPPY I WAS SPEAKING GERMAN.









# TYROL

EVERY MORNING, I WAS RUDELY AWAKENED BY THE SOUND OF LUCIA'S HAIR DRYER



IT WAS MY VERY OWN ALARM CLOCK SET FOR 6:30 ON THE DOT



WOKEN BY A HAIR DRYER TO THEN RETURN TO A SCHOOL WHERE I HAD NO FRIENDS.



BUT IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED. WAS ARRIVING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TRIMESTER AND CLIQUES HAD ALREADY FORMED.





AND THEN THERE WAS THE FIRST MATH TEST I DISTINGUISHED MYSELF BY MY HIGH LEVEL



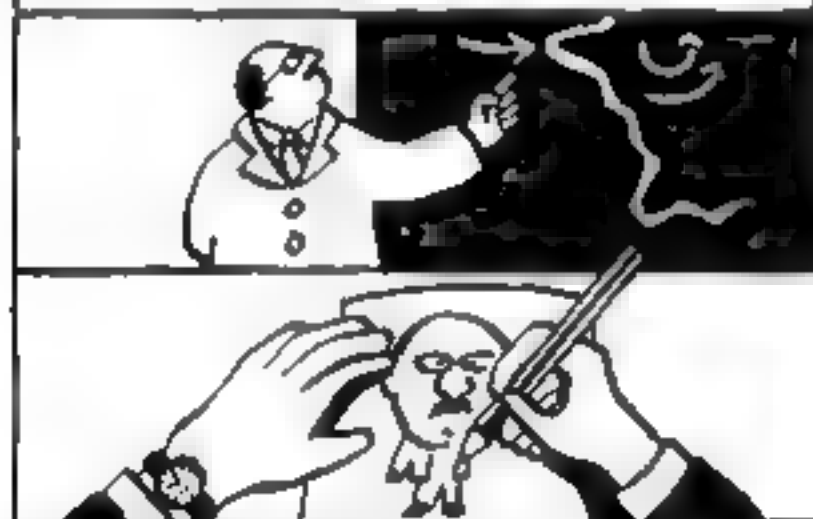
SATRAPI! BRAVO! EXCELLENT WORK JUST ONE MISTAKE COST YOU HALF A POINT YOU GOT A 49.5 OUT OF 50

OH SHIT!



THIS GRADE WON ME A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ATTENTION I WAS VERY POPULAR WHEN IT CAME TO MATH HOMEWORK

THEN I BEGAN TO DRAW CARICATURES OF THE TEACHERS. I HAD GOTTEN INTO THIS HABIT WITH MY TEACHERS IN IRAN.



THE DIFFERENCE BEING THAT THEY WERE ALL VEILED, THEREFORE MUCH EASIER TO DRAW

THESE PORTRAITS ALSO BROUGHT ME SOME GOODWILL



BESIDES, MY MISTAKES IN FRENCH MADE ME SOMEONE OF INTEREST. IT HAD BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE I'D PRACTICED MY FRENCH, AFTER THE CLOSING OF THE BILINGUAL SCHOOLS BY THE ISLAMIC GOVERNMENT

WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT THING, YOU KNOW, LIKE A RULER?

WHAT THING?



OH, THAT THING! YOU KNOW, A DICK!

OH, RIGHT! WE CALL IT A DICK

A DICK?



CAN YOU LEND ME YOUR DICK?

???

HA! HA! HA! HA!



WELL, AT LEAST I EXISTED.

• I MEANT A TRIANGLE.



THINGS EVOLVED. AFTER SOME TIME JULIE, THE SILENT GIRL IN THE SECOND ROW, TOOK AN INTEREST IN ME SHE WAS AN EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD FRENCH GIRL, IN A CLASS WHERE THE AVERAGE AGE WAS FOURTEEN.



I UNDERSTOOD LATER THAT HER RESERVE CAME FROM THE FACT THAT SHE CONSIDERED THE OTHERS TO BE SPOILED CHILDREN. BUT I WAS DIFFERENT. I HAD KNOWN WAR.

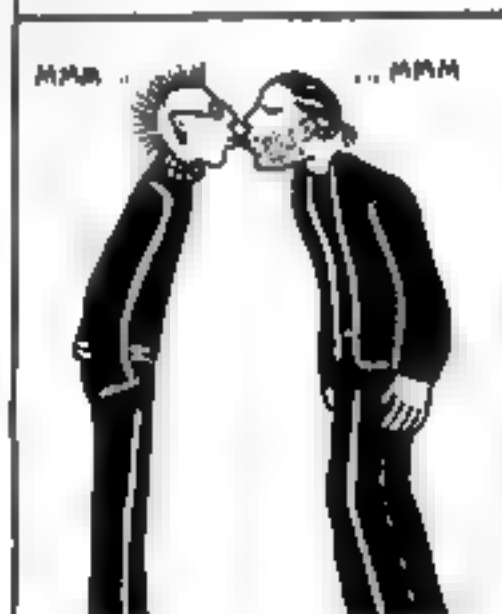
SHE INTRODUCED ME TO MOMO. HE WAS TWO YEARS OLDER.



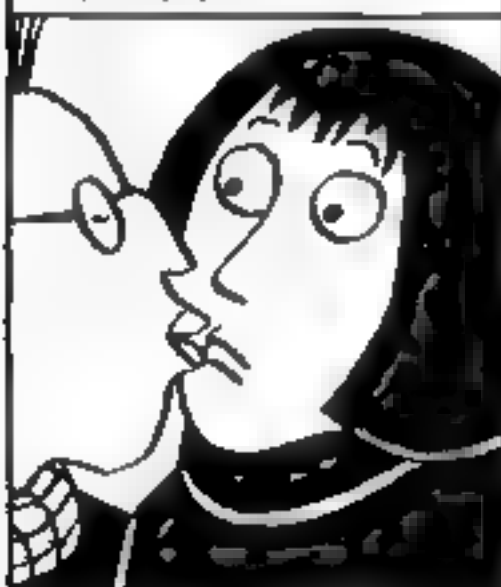
YOU'VE ALREADY SEEN LOTS OF DEAD PEOPLE?



MOMO GREETED PEOPLE IN HIS OWN WAY.



SO IT WAS HE WHO KISSED ME ON THE MOUTH FOR THE FIRST TIME.



THROUGH MOMO I GOT TO KNOW THIERRY AND OLIVIER, TWO SWISS GERMAN BOYS WHO WERE LIVING IN AUSTRIA WITH THEIR UNCLE, A DIPLOMAT



THE FACT THAT I WAS LIVING WITHOUT MY PARENTS ALSO SUITED JULIE.



AN ECCENTRIC A PUNK, TWO ORPHANS AND A THIRD-WORLDER, WE MADE QUITE A GROUP OF FRIENDS THEY WERE REALLY INTERESTED IN MY STORY ESPECIALLY MOMO HE WAS FASCINATED BY DEATH.









FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1984. THE STREETS WERE PACKED. THE HOLIDAY FRENZY HAD INFECTED EVERYONE. THOUGHT OF THIERRY WHEN HE TALKED ABOUT IT BEING "GOOD FOR BUSINESS."



MY STREET, THOUGH, WAS DESERTED. THERE WEREN'T ANY STORES.



WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ALL ALONE FOR TWO WEEKS? EVEN THE BOARDING HOUSE WILL BE EMPTY.



WHEN I GOT BACK I FOUND LUCIA. STILL FAITHFUL TO HER POST.



ARE YOU OKAY?









LUCIA'S PARENTS WERE INCREDIBLE. THEY WERE UNLIKE ANYONE I'D EVER MET. HER TYROLEAN AUSTRIAN FATHER WORE PANTS MADE OF LEATHER. HER TYROLEAN TALIAN MOTHER HAD A MUSTACHE. ONLY HER SISTER REMINDED ME OF HE'DI!



AFTERH DINNEKH WE  
AKH GOING TO CHURKKH

JA!

AAA



THEIR GERMAN WAS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND.

AND INDEED WE WENT TO CHURCH FOR MIDNIGHT MASS.



IT ENDED AT THREE IN THE MORNING



LUCIA'S FAMILY HAD NEVER SEEN ANY IRANIS. I WAS THEREFORE INVITED OVER EVERY DAY BY AN UNCLE AND AN AUNT WHO WANTED TO GET TO KNOW ME.



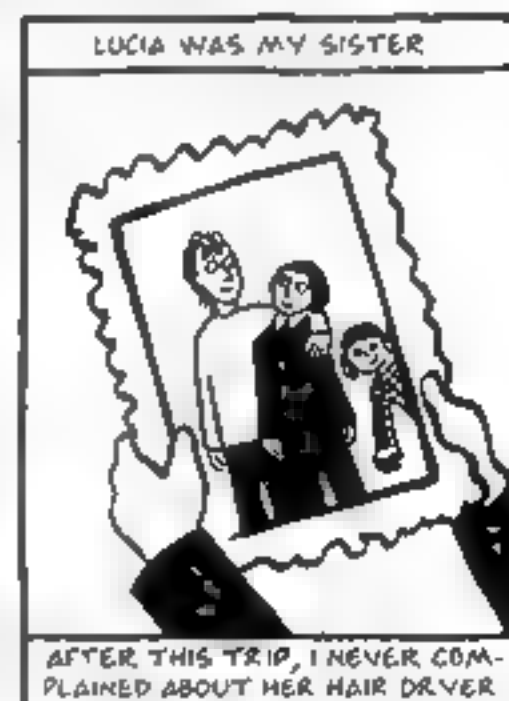
MY GERMAN WAS RUDIMENTARY, THEIRS UNUSUAL. A COUSIN WHO HAD SPENT FOUR YEARS IN FRANCOPHONE SWITZERLAND ENJOYED ACTING AS MY TRANSLATOR.



AS OPPOSED TO MY SCHOOL FRIENDS' FAVORITE SUBJECTS OF CONVERSATION, WE NEVER TOUCHED ON WAR, OR DEATH.



I HAD A NEW SET OF PARENTS.



\* DEAR





# PASTA





SO THEY WENT OFF SKIING AND SET MYSELF TO READING. I STARTED WITH BAKUNIN. I LEARNED THAT HE WAS RUSSIAN, THAT HE HAD BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL\* AND THAT HE REJECTED ALL AUTHORITY, ESPECIALLY THAT OF THE STATE



ASIDE FROM THAT, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND MUCH OF HIS PHILOSOPHY AS SURELY MOMO DIDN'T EITHER

THEN, I STUDIED THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNE



I CONCLUDED THAT THE FRENCH RIGHT OF THIS EPOCH WERE WORTHY OF MY COUNTRY'S FUNDAMENTALISTS.

THEN, I TURNED MY ATTENTION TO SARTRE, MY COMRADES' FAVORITE AUTHOR.

"THE NOTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS COMES FROM MAN'S LIVED EXPERIENCE."



I FOUND HIM A LITTLE ANNOYING

\* FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF COMMUNIST COOPERATORS.

WHEN I'D HAD ENOUGH OF READING, I WENT TO THE SUPERMARKET



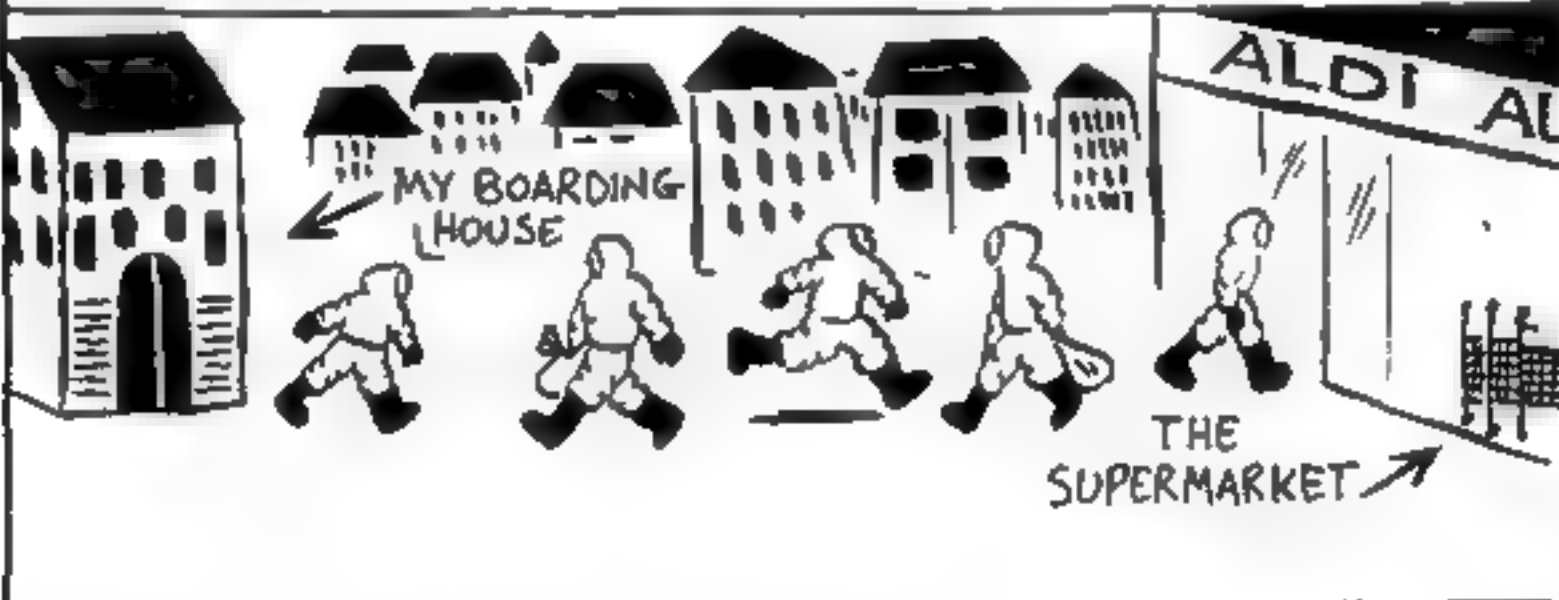
IT WAS SO COLD THAT I HAD THE BRIGHT IDEA OF WEARING MY SKI SUIT BROUGHT FROM TEHRAN, TO GO OUT



DECKED OUT LIKE THIS IN VIENNA, I FELT LIKE I WAS ON THE SLOPES OF INNSBRUCK, CLOSE TO MY FRIENDS



I WAS SO BORED THAT TO BUY FOUR DIFFERENT PRODUCTS, I WOULD GO TO THE SUPERMARKET AT LEAST FOUR TIMES.





IF I'D HAD ANYTHING FUN TO DO, I DON'T THINK WOULD EVER HAVE READ AS MUCH AS I DID.



TO EDUCATE MYSELF I HAD TO UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING. STARTING WITH MYSELF ME, MARJI THE WOMAN. SO THREW MYSELF INTO READING MY MOTHER'S FAVORITE BOOK



READ "THE SECOND SEX" SIMONE EXPLAINED THAT IF WOMEN PEED STANDING UP THEIR PERCEPTION OF LIFE WOULD CHANGE.



SO I TRIED IT RAN LIGHTLY DOWN MY LEFT LEG. IT WAS A LITTLE DISGUSTING

SEATED IT WAS MUCH SIMPLER AND, AS AN IRANIAN WOMAN, BEFORE LEARNING TO URINATE LIKE A MAN, HEEDED TO LEARN TO BECOME A LIBERATED AND EMANCIPATED WOMAN.





AND THEN CAME THE DAY THE FAMOUS DAY IN THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY WHEN WAS PREPARING MY ETERNAL SPAGHETTI



I WAS VERY HUNGRY SO HUNGRY THAT ONE PLATE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ENOUGH.



WENT DOWNSTAIRS WITH MY POT TO WATCH TV IN THE REFECTORY



I LOVED THAT AT MY PARENTS' HOUSE IT WAS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN "INSPECTOR DERRICK" WAS ON. "HE WAS LIKE" "A" "C"





WHEN SUDDENLY THE MOTHER  
SUPER OR BLOCKED MY LINE OF  
VISION.



A LITTLE  
RESTRAINT,  
MADEMOISELLE!

BUT HERE EVERYONE  
EATS WHILE  
WATCHING TV

BLT NOT A 2000  
WHAT KIND OF MONKERS  
ARE THESE?



"S' TRUE WHAT  
THEY SAY ABOUT  
IRANAINS THEY  
HAVE NO EDUCATION



IT'S TRUE WHAT  
THEY SAY ABOUT  
YOU, TOO.  
YOU WERE ALL  
PROSTITUTES  
BEFORE BECOMING  
NUNS!

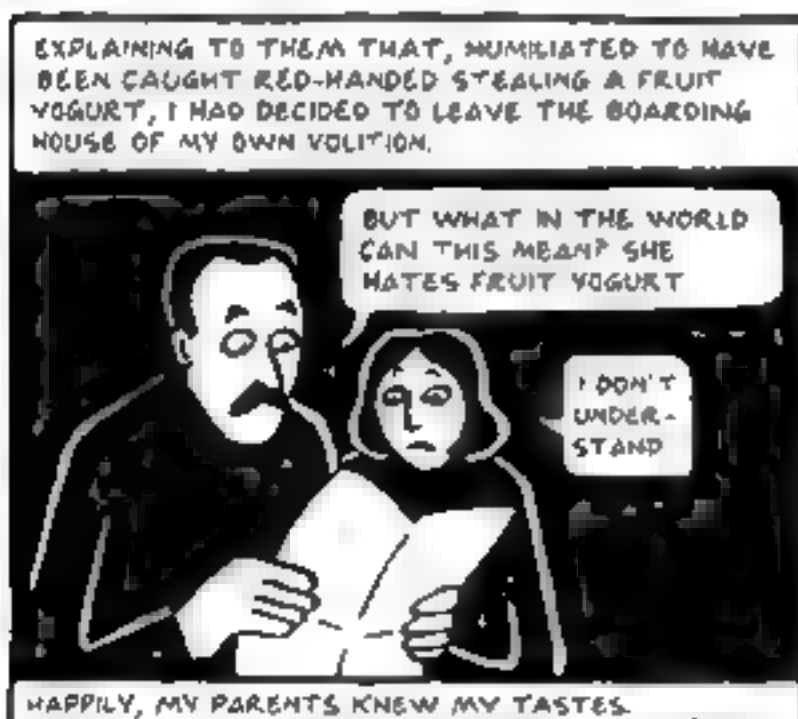




THE MOTHER SUPERIOR NO LONGER WANTED TO SEE ME, SO I WAS CALLED BEFORE HER ASSISTANT











# THE PILL

MY NEW HOME WAS A LOT MORE COMFORTABLE THAN THE BOARDING HOUSE I SHARED JULIE'S ROOM



WOULD YOU BELIEVE HAVE A DATE WITH ERNST THE OWNER OF CAFE SCHLTER



BUT HOW OLD IS THIS OWNER?



YES MATURE THE WAY I LIKE THEM



OK, I'M OFF

DID YOU DO YOUR HOMEWORK?



BYE, MOM!

JULIE, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?



AND THE SISTERS WHO FOUND ME INSOLENT IF ONLY THEY'D SEEN JULIE.

IN MY CULTURE, PARENTS WERE SACRED. WE AT LEAST OWED THEM AN ANSWER

ARMELLE, WOULD YOU LIKE A CUP OF TEA?



TO BEHAVE LIKE THIS TOWARD ONE'S OWN MOTHER MADE ME INDIGNANT

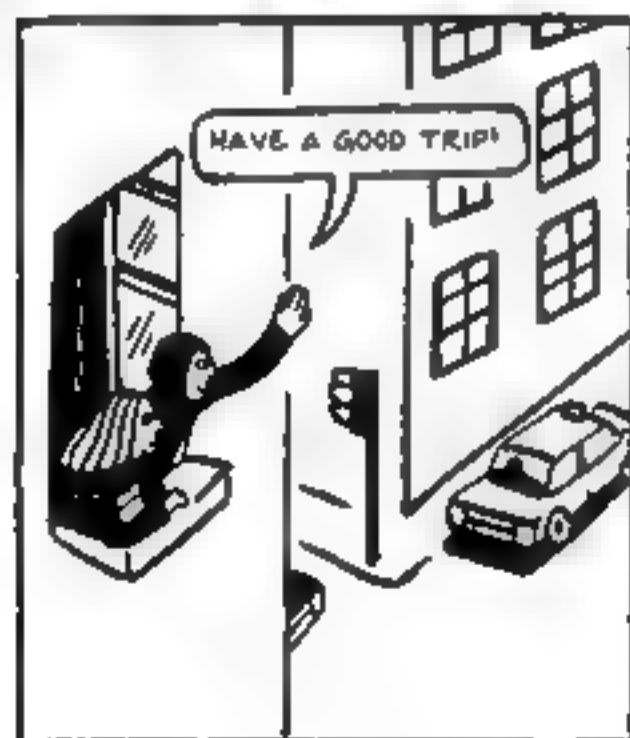
















TO ME, IT WASN'T EXACTLY PARTY MUSIC



AND THE PARTY WAS NOT WHAT I IMAGINED IN KAN, AT PARTIES, EVERYONE WOULD DANCE  
AND EAT IN VIENNA PEOPLE PREFERRED TO LIE AROUND AND SMOKE



AND THEN I WAS TURNED OFF BY ALL THESE PUBLIC D'SPLAYS OF AFFECTION. WHAT DO YOU  
EXPECT, I CAME FROM A TRADITIONAL S' COUNTRY



AROUND FOUR IN THE MORNING, THE LAST GUESTS FINALLY LEFT. WAS SO SLEEPY



WANTED TO REMOVE MY MAKE UP, BUT IT WASN'T COMING OFF WITH WATER.



WENT TO ASK JULIE FOR SOME MAKEUP REMOVER BUT APPARENTLY SHE AND ERNST WERE ALREADY ASLEEP IN OUR ROOM.



WHEN SUDDENLY



OH, OH, OH!  
AH, AH!  
OH YES!  
OH! AH! YES!



MY GOD, THEY WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF .





I RUSHED TO THE LIVING ROOM TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM DON'T  
KNOW WHAT BEHIND MY BEST FRIEND, A BOOK



T GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT  
I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD I  
READ



SEVERAL MINUTES LATER, I MADE OUT IN THE  
DARK THE SILHOUETTE OF A NAKED MAN,



FOLLOWED BY ONE OF A NAKED WOMAN,



THEN A MAN AND WOMAN HALF NAKED!

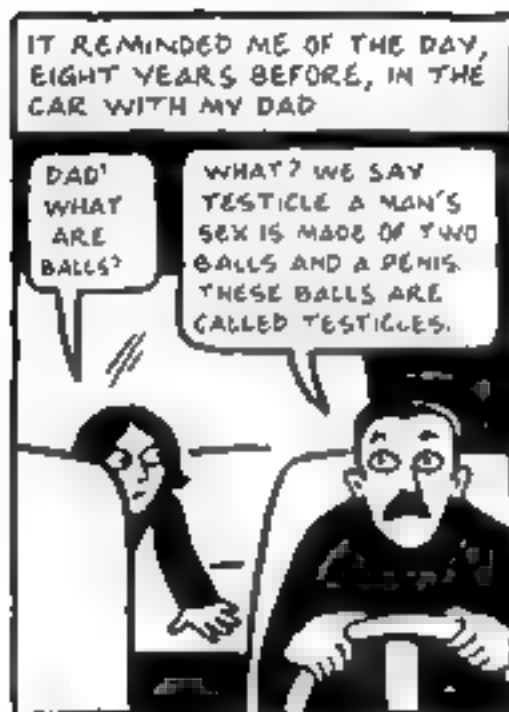


I COULDN'T BELIEVE MY EYES



I'D NEVER SEEN THAT



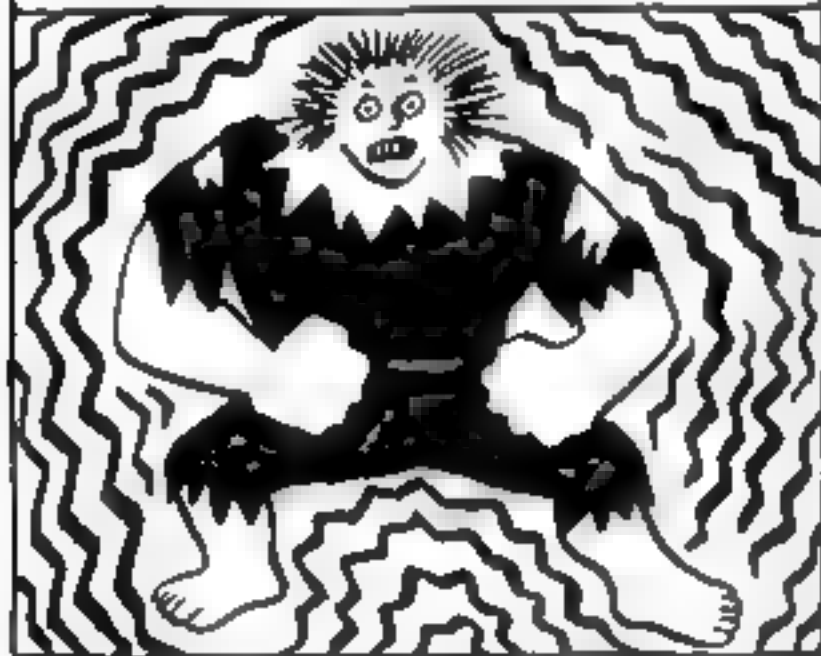






# THE VEGETABLE

MY MENTAL TRANSFORMATION WAS FOLLOWED BY MY PHYSICAL METAMORPHOSIS



BETWEEN THE AGES OF FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN, I GREW SEVEN INCHES. IT WAS IMPRESSIVE.

ME AT FIFTEEN



ME AT SIXTEEN



MY HEAD ALSO CHANGED IN ITS OWN WAY FIRST, MY FACE GOT LONGER



THEN MY RIGHT EYE GREW,



FOLLOWED SWIFTLY BY MY CHIN WHICH DOUBLED IN LENGTH.



THEN IT WAS MY MOUTH,



MY RIGHT HAND,



MY LEFT FOOT



(EVEN TODAY, IT'S HALF A SIZE BIGGER THAN MY RIGHT FOOT.)

OF COURSE MY NOSE TRIPLED ITS SIZE.



AND WAS DECORATED BY A LARGE BEAUTY MARK



WHICH I THOUGHT HIDEOUS AT THE TIME

THEN MY CHIN ADVANCED MAJESTICALLY,



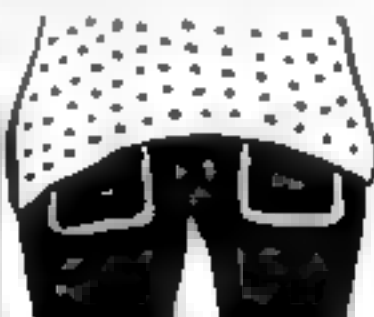
ONLY TO RETREAT TO ITS ORIGINAL POSITION SEVERAL MONTHS LATER.



FINALLY MY CHEST DEVELOPED



AND MY CENTER OF GRAVITY WAS BALANCED OUT BY THE POUNDS ON MY BUTT



IN SHORT, I WAS IN AN UGLY STAGE SEEMINGLY WITHOUT END



AS IF MY NATURAL DEFORMITY WASN'T ENOUGH, I TRIED A FEW NEW HAIRCUTS. A LITTLE SNIP OF THE SCISSORS ON THE LEFT.



AND A WEEK LATER, A LITTLE SNIP OF THE SCISSORS ON THE RIGHT



I LOOKED LIKE COSETTE IN "LES MISÉRABLES."



SO I COATED MY HAIR WITH GEL,



I ADDED A THICK LINE OF EYELINER,



A FEW SAFETY PINS,



WHICH WERE REPLACED BY A SCARF. IT SOFTENED THE LOOK.



IT WAS BEGINNING TO LOOK LIKE SOMETHING.

HAVE YOU SEEN HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS NOW?



TO MY ENORMOUS SURPRISE, MY NEW LOOK EVEN PLEASED THE HALL MONITORS. IT SHOULD BE SAID THAT THEY WERE VERY YOUNG.

YOU CHANGE YOUR HAIRSTYLE EVERY DAY WHO CUTS YOUR HAIR?

IF I PAY YOU, WILL YOU CUT MY HAIR, TOO?

I DO

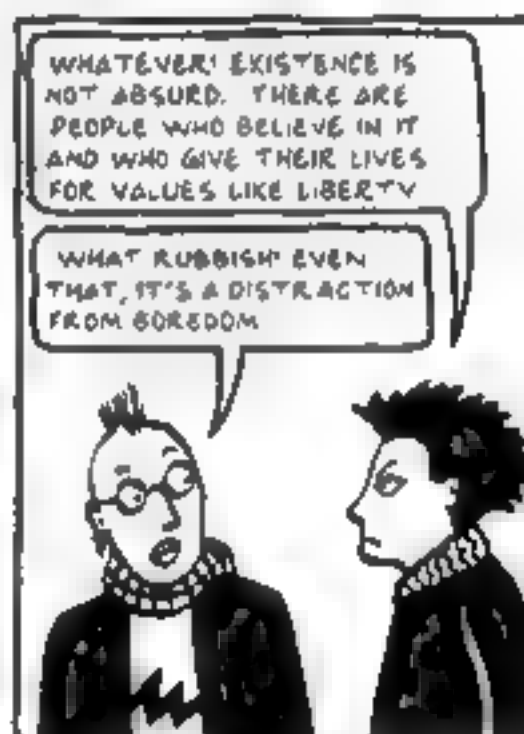


THAT'S HOW I BECAME THE SCHOOL'S OFFICIAL HAIRCUTTER.



IT HELPED ME EARN A LITTLE SPENDING MONEY







IT WAS ALWAYS THIERRY WHO ROLLED THE JOINTS WHILE WE KEPT AN EYE OUT FOR THE MONITORS SO WE WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT BY SURPRISE



HERE!



I DIDN'T LIKE TO SMOKE, BUT I DID IT OUT OF SOLIDARITY AT THE TIME, TO ME, GRASS AND HEROIN WERE THE SAME THING.

EACH TIME I WAS OFFERED A JOINT, I REMEMBERED THIS CONVERSATION MY PARENTS HAD ABOUT MY COUSIN KAMRAN

POOR BOY HE'S STUCK HIMSELF SO MANY TIMES HE'S BEGUN TO LOOK LIKE A VEGETABLE

THIS KIND OF THING ALWAYS HAPPENS TO THE MOST FRAGILE ONES



BECOMING A VEGETABLE WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION



SO I PRETENDED TO PARTICIPATE BUT I NEVER INHALED THE SMOKE.



AND AS SOON AS MY FRIENDS' BACKS WERE TURNED I STUCK MY FINGERS IN MY EYES TO MAKE THEM GOOD AND RED.



THEN I IMITATED THEIR LAUGHTER



I WAS QUITE BELIEVABLE.



THE HARDER I TRIED TO ASSIMILATE, THE MORE I HAD THE FEELING THAT I WAS DISTANCING MYSELF FROM MY CULTURE, BETRAYING MY PARENTS AND MY ORIGINS, THAT I WAS PLAYING A GAME BY SOMEBODY ELSE'S RULES.



EACH TELEPHONE CALL FROM MY PARENTS REMINDED ME OF MY COWARDICE AND MY BETRAYAL. I WAS AT ONCE HAPPY TO HEAR THEIR VOICES AND ASHAMED TO TALK TO THEM.

- YES, I'M DOING FINE. I'M GETTING GOOD GRADES.
- FRIENDS? OF COURSE, LOTS!
- DAD,
- DAD, I LOVE YOU!

- YOU HAVE SOME GOOD FRIENDS?
- THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME, YOU ALWAYS HAD A TALENT FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE!
- EAT ORANGES. THEY'RE FULL OF VITAMIN C.
- US TOO, WE ADORE YOU. YOU'RE THE CHILD ALL PARENTS DREAM OF HAVING!



IF ONLY THEY KNEW — IF THEY KNEW THAT THEIR DAUGHTER WAS MADE UP LIKE A PUNK, THAT SHE SMOKED JOINTS TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION, THAT SHE HAD SEEN MEN IN THEIR UNDERWEAR WHILE THEY WERE BEING BOMBED EVERY DAY, THEY WOULDN'T CALL ME THEIR DREAM CHILD.



I FELT SO GUILTY THAT WHENEVER THERE WAS NEWS ABOUT IRAN, I CHANGED THE CHANNEL.



IT WAS TOO UNBEARABLE.



DID YOU WATCH TV YESTERDAY? YOU MUST BE WORRIED.

NO, IT'S OKAY! TALKED TO MY PARENTS. THEY'RE FINE.



WAS LYING. I KNEW NOTHING AND I DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW MORE.

WANTED TO FORGET EVERYTHING, TO MAKE MY PAST DISAPPEAR, BUT MY UNCONSCIOUS CAUGHT UP WITH ME.





EVEN MANAGED TO DENY MY NATIONALITY



DURING A PARTY AT SCHOOL.



H, I'M MARC. I GRADUATED LAST YEAR YOU'RE NEW! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

MARTINE. I'VE BEEN HERE A YEAR

AND WHERE ARE YOU FROM MARIE JEANNE?

I'M FRENCH.

OH REALLY? YOU HAVE A FUNNY ACCENT FOR A FRENCH GIRL.

OH HAVE TO FIND MY FRIENDS BYE

SHOULD SAY THAT AT THE TIME RAN WAS THE EPITOME OF EVIL AND TO BE IRANIAN WAS A HEAVY BURDEN TO BEAR



IT WAS EASIER TO LIE THAN TO ASSUME THAT BURDEN

WHO'S THAT GUY?

MARC? HE'S ANNA'S BROTHER THE GIRL IN THE STRIPED SWEATER. HE'S A JERK FROM BURGE YOU SHOULDN'T TALK TO THOSE PEOPLE



AND WHEN I GOT BACK THAT NIGHT I REMEMBERED THAT LIKE MY GRANDMOTHER TOLD ME "ALWAYS KEEP YOUR DIGNITY AND BE TRUE TO YOURSELF"

OH GRANDMA















# THE HORSE

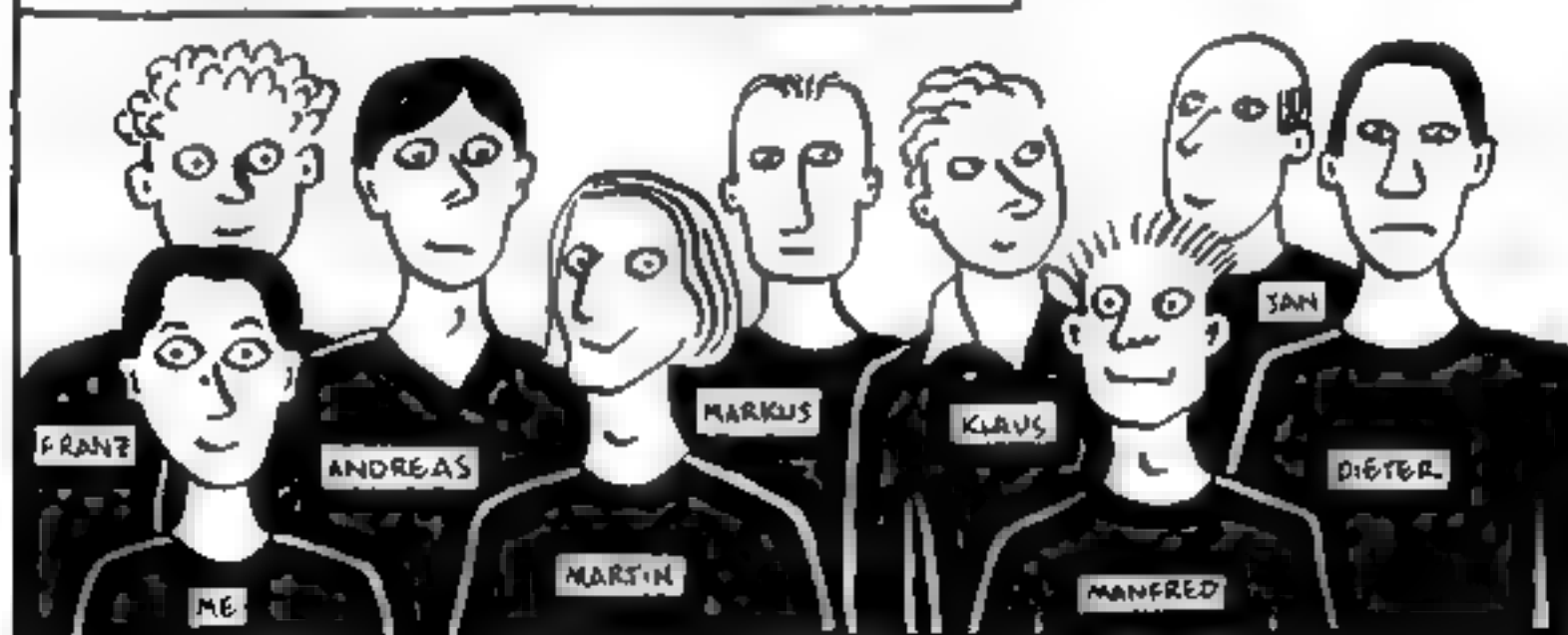
TULIE AND HER MOTHER HAD LEFT VIENNA. NOW I WAS LIVING IN A WOHNUNGEMEINSCHAFT. THE WOHNUNGEMEINSCHAFT IS A COMMUNAL APARTMENT. I COULD STAY FOR FOUR MONTHS.



IT WAS FULL OF LIGHT. I HAD A DOUBLE-BED, A BUREAU, AND A DESK. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME I HAD MY OWN SPACE.



MY EIGHT HOUSEMATES WERE EIGHT MEN, ALL HOMOSEXUALS.









EVEN THOUGH I HAD BEEN NINETEEN MONTHS SINCE I HAD SEEN MY MOTHER, THE FIFTEEN DAYS OF WAITING WERE VERY LONG. THE DAY OF HER ARRIVAL, I BATHED LIKE NEVER BEFORE.



I IRONED MY CLOTHES FOR THE FIRST TIME,



I MADE MYSELF AS BEAUTIFUL AS I COULD BEFORE GOING TO MEET HER AT THE AIRPORT



I SAW FROM AFAR A WOMAN WHO LOOKED LIKE HER, THE SAME SILHOUETTE, THE SAME WALK, BUT WITH GRAY HAIR. MY MOTHER WAS A BRUNETTE

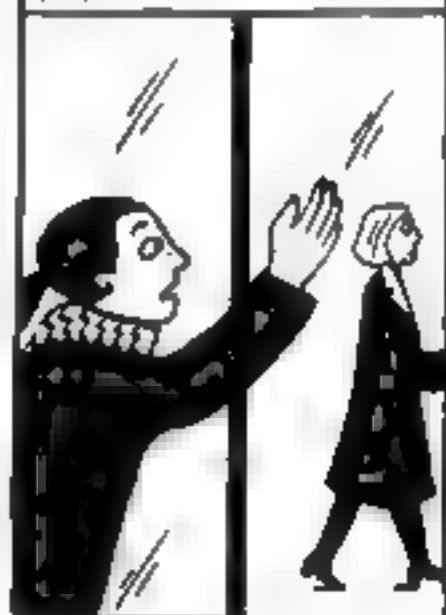


WHEN THIS WOMAN GOT CLOSE, THERE WASN'T ANY DOUBT IT WAS REALLY HER BEFORE I LEFT HOME, MOM ONLY HAD A FEW GRAY HAIRS. IT'S INCREDIBLE WHAT TIME DOES TO YOU



I DIDN'T KNOW IF SHE HADN'T RECOGNIZED ME, OR HADN'T HEARD ME.

IN ANY CASE, SHE DIDN'T STOP



MOM!

MARSI?



SHE HADN'T RECOGNIZED ME, AND WITH GOOD REASON I'D ALMOST DOUBLED IN HEIGHT AND SIZE.

OH MY DEAR, YOU ARE SO TALL!

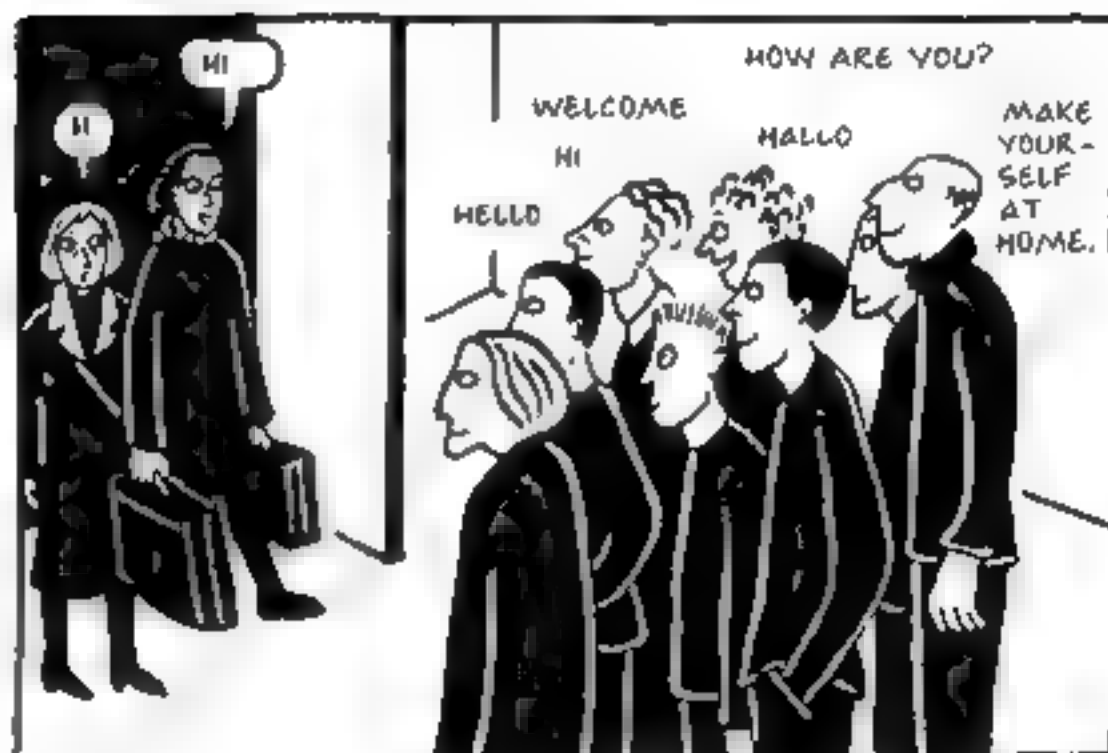
DUTY FREE SHOP

MOM! MOM, YOU'VE GONE GRAY!



IT FELT STRANGE TO TAKE HER IN MY ARMS, OUR PROPORTIONS HAD BEEN REVERSED.







RECOUNTING NINETEEN MONTHS IN A FEW DAYS ISN'T EASY. WE HAD TO TALK A LOT TO MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME. OUR CONVERSATIONS WERE ALWAYS DISJOINTED.

TELL ME, HOW'S DAD? WHAT'S HE DOING?

OH, HE TAKES CARE OF THE GAS IN TEHRAN'S BUILDINGS

IT FRUSTRATES HIM A LITTLE. YOU KNOW, YOUR FATHER SPECIALIZED IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL FACTORIES, BUT DURING WARTIME THERE'S NO POINT IN BUILDING

IS HE HAPPY ANYWAY?

YES, HE'S OKAY HE MISSES YOU ENORMOUSLY, BUT HE'S HAPPY THAT YOU'RE LIVING HERE, FAR FROM THE PROBLEMS.

MOM, WHERE'S YOUR NECKLACE?

MY MOTHER ALWAYS WORE A GOLDEN PENDANT THAT DAD HAD GIVEN HER FOR THEIR TENTH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

I LEFT IT IN IRAN. YOU SEE, WE DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO TAKE ANYTHING OF VALUE OUT OF THE COUNTRY

LEARNED LATER THAT SHE HAD LIED TO ME.

YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT I MADE?

NO, NO, I LOVE IT I'M JUST NOT VERY HUNGRY

THERE AGAIN, SHE WAS LYING. AFTER THIS DAY, SHE NEVER AGAIN LET ME DO THE COOKING.

HERE - A LETTER FROM YOUR FATHER. I'M NOT THE ONE WHO OPENED IT, IT'S THE CUSTOMS IN TEHRAN. THEY CHECK EVERYTHING

IN THE LETTER, HE WAS OVERJOYED BY THE THOUGHT THAT I HAD A PEACEFUL LIFE IN VIENNA.

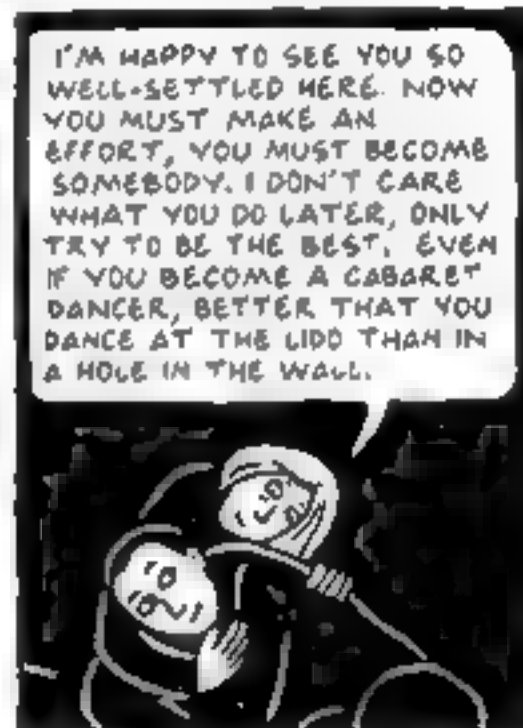
IF YOU ONLY KNEW...

I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT HE DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT I WAS ENDURING.





\* A MOUNTAINOUS CITY NORTH OF TEHRAN











\* SHE'S SO FAT!



\* 150 DOLLARS.





I SPENT TWENTY SEVEN DAYS BY HER SIDE I TASTED THE HEAVENLY FOOD OF MY COUNTRY, PREPARED BY MY MOTHER IT WAS A CHANGE FROM PASTA



SHE STROKED MY HAIR EVERY NIGHT TO PUT ME TO SLEEP.



IT RELAXED ME TO TALK TO HER. I HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'D BEEN ABLE TO TALK TO SOMEONE WITHOUT HAVING TO EXPLAIN MY CULTURE.



THE EVE OF HER DEPARTURE.

MY DEAR YOU WON'T INSULT OR HELLER RIGHT?

I PROMISE.



BUY YOURSELF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. YOU MUST EAT WELL. IT'S NOT FOR NOTHING THAT THEY SAY YOU NEED TO EAT IN A HEALTHY BODY.



LOOK! I MADE SOME SKETCHES INSPIRED BY OUR SHOPPING. I'LL MAKE YOU SOME OUTFITS, YOU'RE IN NEED OF SOME NEW ONES



EVER SINCE MY ARRIVAL IN AUSTRIA, I HADN'T BOUGHT MYSELF ANYTHING AND, GIVEN MY GROWTH SPURT, MY CLOTHES NO LONGER FIT ME

THEN CAME THE DREADED DAY OF DEPARTURE. I WAS SAD BUT, WELL, I'D BEGUN TO GET USED TO SEPARATIONS.



MY MOTHER LEFT

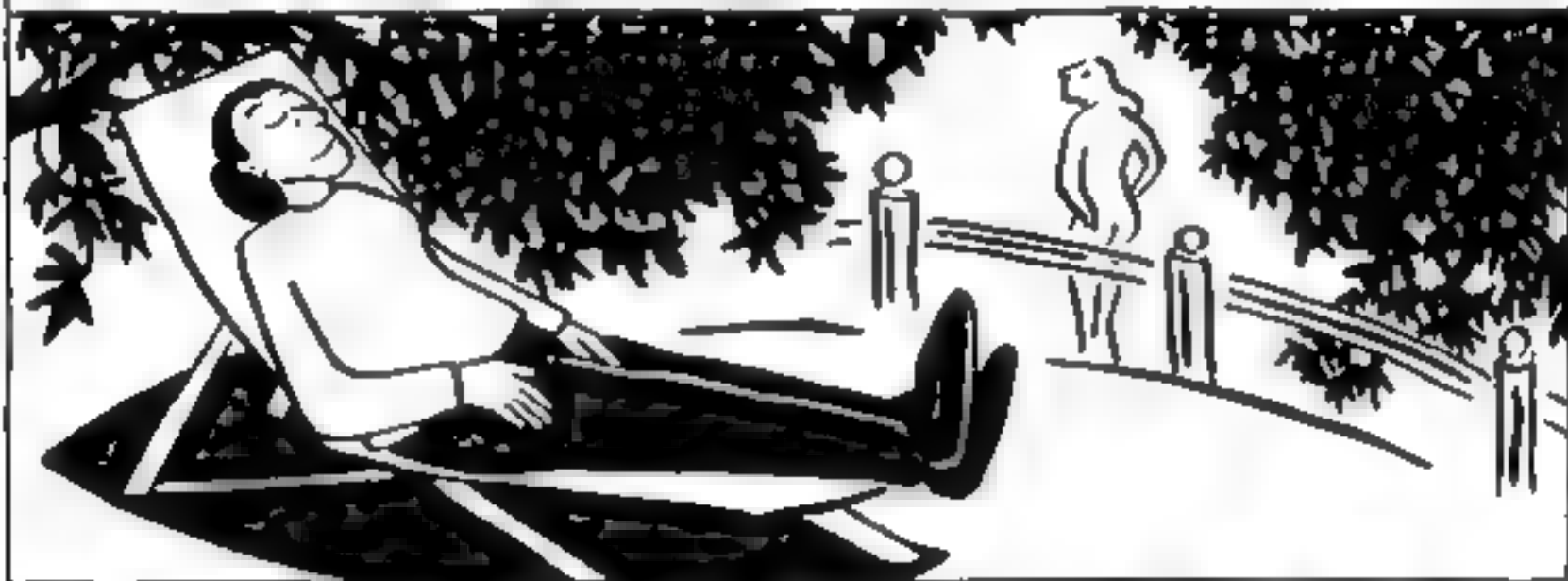


I'M SURE THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD THE MISERY OF MY ISOLATION EVEN IF SHE KEPT A STRAIGHT FACE AND GAVE NOTHING AWAY SHE LEFT ME WITH A BAG OF AFFECTION THAT SUSTAINED ME FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.



# HIDE AND SEEK

FRAU DOCTOR HELLER'S HOUSE WAS AN OLD VILLA, BUILT BY HER FATHER, A 1930S SCULPTOR OF SOME RENOWN. THE BIG TERRACE THAT LOOKED OUT ON THE GARDEN WAS MY FAVORITE PLACE. I SPENT SOME VERY PLEASANT MOMENTS THERE.



ONLY THE EXCREMENT OF VICTOR, FRAU DOCTOR HELLER'S DOG, DISTURBED THIS HARMONY



ON AVERAGE, HE DEFECATED ONCE A WEEK ON MY BED.



DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA? IT'S THE FIFTH TIME IN A MONTH! IT'S UNACCEPTABLE! WHY DON'T YOU TRAIN HIM?

YES, WELL, I'M GOING TO HAVE THE SHEETS CHANGED



I OFTEN FORGOT THAT HE WAS TOO OLD TO LEARN ANYTHING.

YOU ARE REALLY VERY UPTIGHT





ALL MY FRIENDS HAD LEFT OUR SCHOOL. JULIE WAS IN SPAIN, THERRY AND OLIVIER HAD GONE BACK TO SWITZERLAND AND MONO HAD BEEN EXPELLED. I WAS ALONE AT SCHOOL, BUT I DIDN'T CARE.



MY LACK OF INTEREST IN OTHERS MADE ME MORE INTERESTING.

HOW'S IT GOING, MARJANE?

FINE,  
FINE!

EVER SINCE I'D SEEN MY MOTHER, I DIDN'T NEED ANYONE.

WELL, ALMOST.

DO YOU WANT TO WALK HOME TOGETHER?

NO. MY BOYFRIEND'S COMING TO GET ME.



HIS NAME WAS ENRIQUE. I'D MET HIM THROUGH DIETER, ONE OF MY FORMER HOUSEMATES.



ENRIQUE WAS HALF-AUSTRIAN, HALF-SPANISH.

WHAT DO YOU SAY ABOUT GOING TO AN ANARCHIST PARTY THIS WEEKEND?

OF COURSE! I'D LOVE TO.



ENRIQUE WAS TWENTY AND PLAYED THE PIANO.

I LIKED HIM A LOT.

THERE'LL BE ABOUT TWENTY OF US, IT'LL BE COOL.

DO YOU KNOW ALL OF THEM?

YES.

LEARNING THAT HE KNEW REAL ANARCHISTS ONLY INTENSIFIED MY FEELINGS FOR HIM.



"A REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHISTS' PARTY!" IT REMINDED ME OF THE COMMITMENT AND THE BATTLES OF MY CHILDHOOD IN IRAN. EVEN BETTER, IT WOULD PERHAPS ALLOW ME TO BETTER UNDERSTAND BAKUNIN.





FINALLY THE BIG DAY ARRIVED



AFTER AN HOUR AND A HALF ON THE ROAD WE ARRIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOREST



IN THE DISTANCE I SAW A GROUP OF JOCKS CHASING ONE ANOTHER AND SHOUTING



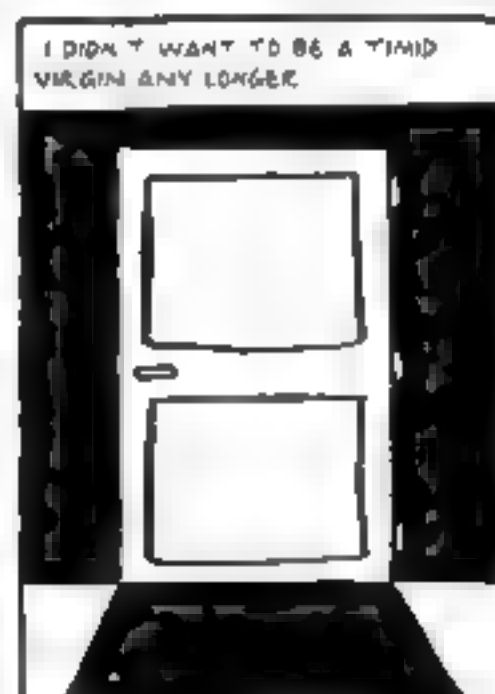
WHAT A DISAPPOINTMENT  
PROFOUND CONTEMPT

MY ENTHUSIASM WAS QUICKLY REPLACED BY A FEELING OF DISGUST AND



















I LOST TOUCH WITH ENRIQUE BUT HIS ANARCHIST FRIENDS ADOPTED ME. MY LIFE WAS SPLIT BETWEEN THEM, MY SCHOOL, AND FRAU DOCTOR HELLER'S HOUSE.



THE COMMUNAL LIFE WENT HAND IN HAND WITH THE USE OF ALL KINDS OF MOOD ENHANCERS WEED, HASH,



TRIPPED EVERY WEEKEND, AND YOU COULD SEE IT ON MY FACE

MY PHYSICS TEACHER, YONNEL ARROUAS, WAS WORRIED ABOUT ME.

MARIANE, ARE YOU OKAY? YOU CAN TALK TO ME IF YOU'D LIKE



AT HOME, THERE'S A WAR. I'M SCARED FOR MY PARENTS. I'M ALONE AND I FEEL GUILTY. I DON'T HAVE MUCH MONEY. MY UNCLE WAS ASSASSINATED. I SAW MY NEIGHBOR DIE IN A BOMBING.



I SENSED THAT HE DIDN'T BELIEVE ME. HE MUST HAVE THOUGHT THAT I WAS EXAGGERATING.

I PERSISTED ANYWAY. I NEEDED TO TALK SO MUCH.

THEN, I LIVE IN THIS CRAZY WOMAN'S HOUSE. MY BOYFRIEND

ENOUGH, IT'S OKAY. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME OVER FOR LUNCH AT OUR HOUSE ON SATURDAY? MY MOTHER WILL BE THERE, TOO.



ACCEPTED.

AT HIS HOUSE, I PLAYED WITH HIS TWINS, TOHANNA AND CAROLINE



SPENT A LONG TIME TALKING TO MRS. ARROUAS, MY TEACHER'S MOTHER, A FRENCHWOMAN OF JEWISH-MOROCCAN ORIGINS.

I UNDERSTAND HOW HARD IT IS FOR YOU. YOU HAVE TO MAKE THREE TIMES THE EFFORT OF ANYONE ELSE TO SUCCEED. THAT'S THE IMMIGRANT LOT! IT WAS THE SAME FOR ME, WHEN I ARRIVED IN FRANCE.



BE STRONG. ALL WILL GO WELL FOR YOU. I HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON.

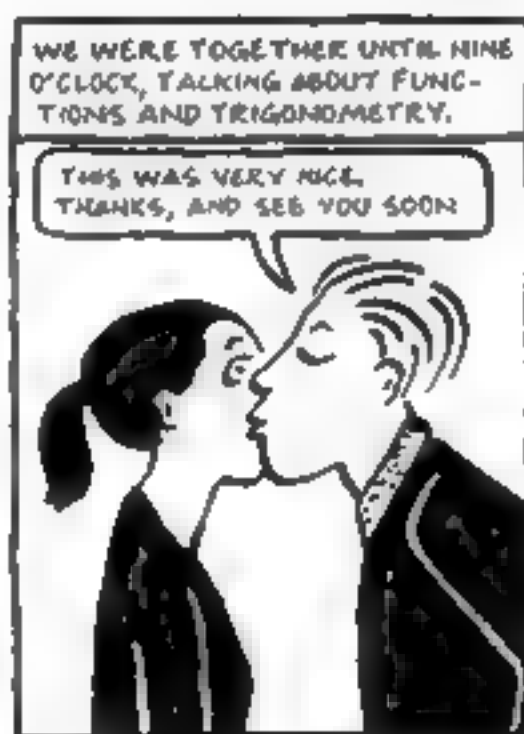
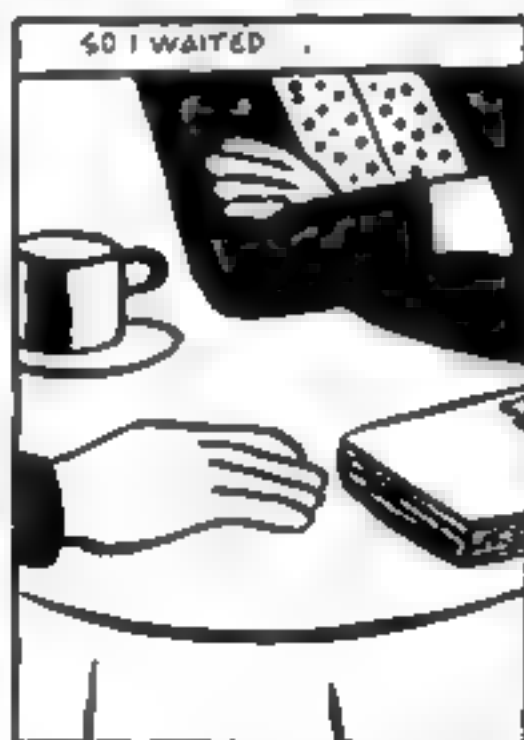


BUT WE NEVER SAW EACH OTHER AGAIN. YONNEL'S WIFE DIDN'T LIKE ME. SHE MUST HAVE THOUGHT THAT I WAS MAKING UP STORIES. SO I WAS NEVER AGAIN INVITED OVER.













I DIDN'T ALWAYS LIKE IT, BUT I BY FAR PREFERRED BORING MYSELF WITH HER TO HAVING TO CONFRONT MY SOLITUDE AND MY DISAPPOINTMENTS.



LITTLE BY LITTLE, I BECAME THE PORTRAIT OF DORIAN GRAY THE MORE TIME PASSED, THE MORE I WAS MARKED.



BUT THIS KIND OF DECADENCE WAS PLEASING TO SOME AND THAT'S HOW I MET THE FIRST GREAT LOVE OF MY LIFE



HIS NAME WAS MARKUS HE WAS STUDYING LITERATURE. AT LEAST I WAS SURE THAT HE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE ME BECAUSE OF HIS MATH PROBLEMS.



DO YOU WANT TO GO TO A CLUB?

SURE, WHY NOT?



THIS TIME I DIDN'T MAKE ANY EFFORT AT ALL I DIDN'T PUT ON MY BEST CLOTHES AND I ARRIVED AN HOUR LATE

HAD GIVEN UP I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULDN'T COME I'M HAPPY THAT YOU'RE HERE DO YOU WANT TO DANCE?



WE DANCED ANYWAY YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT

WHAT A LIAR



ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT WE WERE BOTH ONLY CHILDREN, WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING IN COMMON. I WAS UNCOMFORTABLE

HAPPILY, THIS PATHETIC SITUATION DIDN'T LAST LONG. THE CLUB CLOSED AT 2:30 IN THE MORNING

IF YOU WANT, I CAN TAKE YOU HOME, BUT I NEED TO FILL UP FIRST SHALL WE SPLIT IT?

OKAY



NOTHING SURPRISED ME ANYMORE EVEN PAYING FOR GAS SO THAT MY WHITE KNIGHT COULD DRIVE ME HOME SEEMED COMPLETELY NORMAL

YOU KNOW WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU, YOUR REBELLIOUS SIDE AND YOUR NATURAL NONCHALANCE.

THANKS



THEN



THINGS ALWAYS HAPPEN WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT WAS HAPPINESS.



I FINALLY HAD A REAL BOYFRIEND  
WAS OVER THE MOON ONE NIGHT  
AT MARKUS HOUSE,

I'M GOING TO  
WRITE A PLAY

OH YEAH,  
I'D LOVE TO  
BE IN IT



WHEN SUDDENLY

WAS MAMMIE HIER?  
SHE MUSS RAUS GEHEN!



IT WAS HIS MOTHER MARKUS  
DIDN'T HAVE A FATHER. SHE  
THOUGHT I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND  
GERMAN. SHE WAS SAYING THAT  
HAD TO GO "RAUS," OUTSIDE

I ALREADY HEARD THIS  
THREATENING WORD VIELLED AT  
ME IN THE METRO.

DU SCHEIß AUSLANDERIN!  
GIB RAUS!



IT WAS AN OLD MAN WHO SAID  
"DIRTY FOREIGNER, GET OUT!" I  
HAD HEARD IT ANOTHER TIME IN  
THE STREET BUT I TRIED TO  
MAKE LIGHT OF IT. THOUGHT  
THAT I WAS JUST THE  
REACTION OF A HASTY OLD MAN.

BUT THIS, THIS WAS DIFFERENT. I WAS NEITHER AN  
OLD MAN DESTROYED BY THE WAR NOR A YOUNG  
IDIOT. IT WAS MY BOYFRIEND'S MOTHER WHO  
ATTACKED ME. SHE WAS SAYING "HAT" WAS  
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF MARKUS AND HIS SISTER TO  
OBTAIN AN AUSTRIAN PASSPORT. THAT I WAS A NUT.



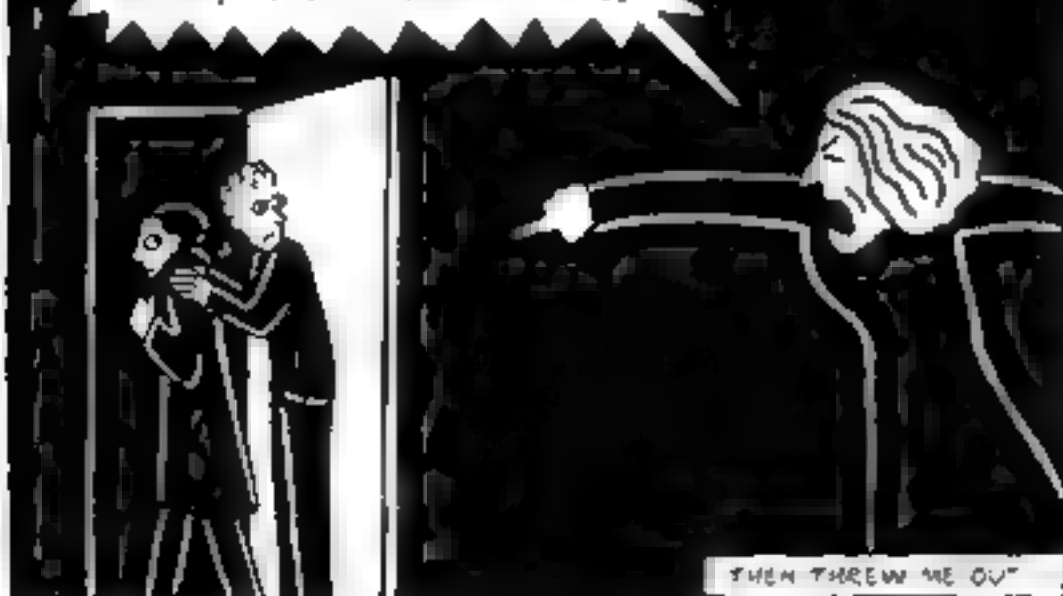
THINK SHE'D NEVER LOOKED AT HERSELF IN THE MIRROR

LAD UNS IN RUHE!



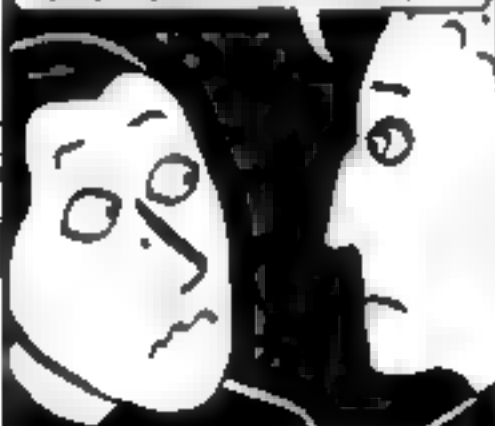
SHE ORDERED ME TO LEAVE THEM ALONE. HER AND  
HER SON.

RAUS! ICH SAGE RAUS!!



THEN THREW ME OUT

GO ON HOME I'LL COME SEE YOU  
TOMORROW AT YOUR HOUSE.



MARKUS MUST HAVE BEEN SUFFERING  
MORE THAN I. HE HAD TO  
SACRIFICE HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH  
HIS MOTHER TO CONTINUE TO SEE  
ME. I DIDN'T WANT TO ADD TO IT.  
SO SAID NOTHING.





• THIS ISN'T A BORDELLO



• I HAD JUST READ HIS THREE ESSAYS ON THE THEORY OF SEXUALITY





MARKUS AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO. WE OFTEN ENDED UP IN HIS CAR, WHERE WE SMOKED JOINTS TO DISTRACT OURSELVES.

LISTEN, I HEARD OF A CAFE WHERE WE CAN BUY CHEAP HASH. DO YOU WANT TO GO SEE? I CAN'T FIND ANYWHERE TO PARK.

OF COURSE!

HERE'S 200 SMILLINGS.



NO IT'S OKAY, I'VE GOT MONEY.

I WENT IN. I WAS VERY, VERY SCARED IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT I'D SET FOOT IN SUCH A SORDID PLACE.



BUT IT WASN'T A BIG DEAL. AFTER ALL, I WAS DOING IT FOR LOVE.



EXCUSE ME, WANT TWO BAGS FOR 200 BUCKS.



FOLLOW ME.



HERE.

THANKS.



MARKUS WAS PROUD OF ME SO PROUD THAT HE TOLD THE WHOLE SCHOOL THAT HIS GIRLFRIEND HAD CONTACTS AT CAFÉ CAMERA.



THIS IS HOW, FOR LOVE, I BEGAN MY CAREER AS A DRUG DEALER. HADN'T I FOLLOWED MY MOTHER'S ADVICE? I GAVE THE BEST OF MYSELF? I WAS NO LONGER A SIMPLE JUNKIE, BUT MY SCHOOL'S OFFICIAL DEALER.



# THE CROISSANT

LUCKILY, I HAD BENEFITED ENOUGH FROM A SOLID EDUCATION TO NEVER DRIFT TOO FAR. IT WAS THE END OF MY LAST YEAR I WAS GOING TO TAKE THE FRENCH BACCALAUREATE.



WHEN I STUDIED WITH THE OTHERS, I REALIZED THAT I HAD MANY GAPS. I NEEDED A MIRACLE TO PASS.

AND THIS MIRACLE HAPPENED ONE NIGHT IN JUNE, DURING MY SLEEP



HEY MARY, THE SUBJECT ON THE BAG, IT WILL BE MONTESQUIEU'S "SLAVERY OF THE NEGROES."

THE NEXT MORNING I CALLED MY MOTHER,



WHO CALLED GOD, WHO IN TURN SENT HIS MESSAGE TO THE EXAMINER



EACH TIME THAT I ASKED MY MOTHER TO PRAY FOR ME, MY WISH WAS GRANTED

DO YOU LIKE THE 18TH CENTURY?

YES



DO YOU LIKE MONTESQUIEU?

YES



YOU HAVE THIRTY MINUTES TO PREPARE "SLAVERY OF THE NEGROES."



I GOT A 17, THE BEST GRADE IN SCHOOL



THEN CAME SUMMER TO BE TRUTHFUL, I WASN'T MAKING ANYTHING BY DEALING BECAUSE I WAS DOING IT AS A FAVOR. SO I SET OUT TO FIND SOME ODD JOBS.



IT WAS SOMETIMES BORING.



SOMETIMES FUN.



ONE DAY I SAW AN AD IN A NEWSPAPER "CAFÉ SOLE IS LOOKING FOR A WAITRESS, THREE EUROPEAN LANGUAGES REQUIRED."



YOU SPEAK GERMAN, ENGLISH AND FRENCH. THAT'S GOOD. HAVE YOU EVER WORKED IN A BAR?

YES

GOOD! YOU START TOMORROW. BUT WATCH OUT! THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT!"



CAFÉ SOLE WAS LOCATED IN THE BEST NEIGHBORHOOD IN VIENNA, I WAS PAID DECENTLY, BUT IT WASN'T ALWAYS EASY WITH THE CUSTOMERS. SOMETIMES, I REALLY WANTED TO SLAP THEM.



NONETHELESS, I HAD AN ALLY IT WAS SVETLANA, THE YUGOSLAVIAN CHEF.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SWEETIE?

SOME MADON PINCHED MY BUTT



TELL ME, WHAT DID HE ORDER, THIS SON-OF-A-BITCH?

A WIENER SCHNITZEL



GOD FORGIVE ME!

RAAK PTOUH!

THERE! JUSTICE IS DONE



SHE REALLY MADE ME LAUGH. THANKS TO HER, I WAS ABLE TO WORK THERE WITHOUT HAVING TO INJURE A FEW MEN WHERE IT COUNTS.







ADMITTEDLY, I WASN'T SELLING DRUGS ANYMORE, BUT I HAD STARTED TAKING MORE AND MORE. AT FIRST, MARKUS WAS VERY IMPRESSED,

ANOTHER ONE??  
YOU'RE TOO STRONG!



THEN, HE STARTED TO LECTURE ME,

IN THE NAME OF GOD! LOOK AT WHAT YOU'RE BECOMING.



AND FINALLY, HE DISTANCED HIMSELF



THIS DECADENT SIDE, WHICH HAD SO PLEASED HIM AT FIRST, ENDED UP PROFOUNDLY ANNOYING HIM.

I SHOULD SAY THAT I WAS SMOKING TOO MANY JOINTS. I WAS CONSTANTLY TIRED AND I OFTEN FELL ASLEEP

THE DEFINITE INTEGRAL OF FUNCTION F ON



MARIANE, ARE YOU OKAY?



WHAT?

DO YOU FEEL WELL?



WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY, SIR? THAT I'M THE VEGETABLE THAT I REFUSED TO BECOME?



THAT I'M SO DISAPPOINTED IN MYSELF THAT I CAN NO LONGER LOOK AT MYSELF IN THE MIRROR? THAT I HATE MYSELF?



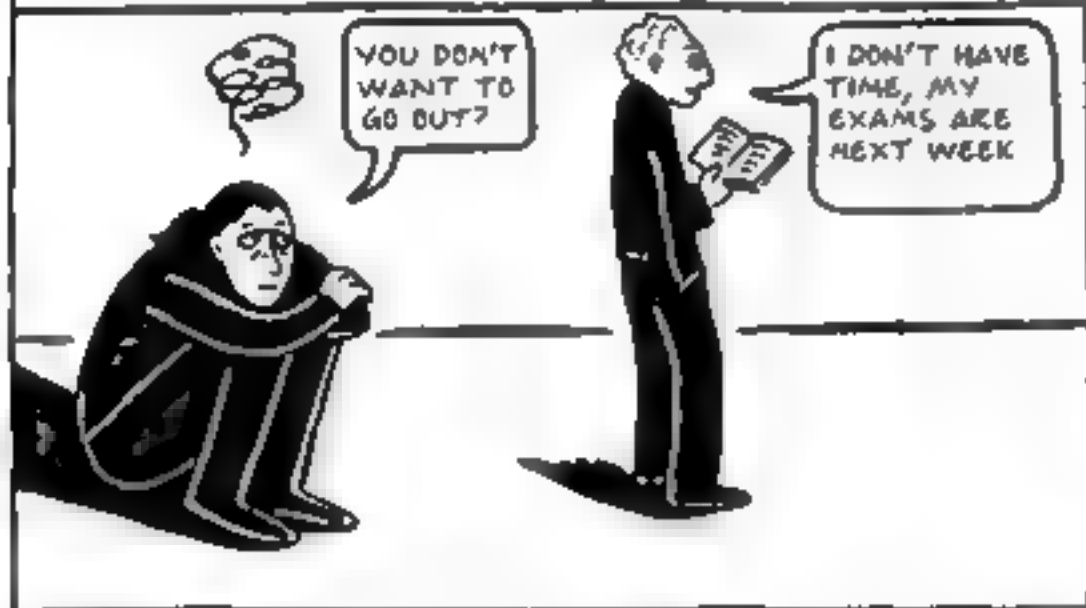
EVERYTHING'S FINE, SIR. I'M A LITTLE SICK, I FEEL VERY TIRED



I REMAINED IN THIS STATE FOR THE REST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR, BUT THANKS TO THE REGISTERED LETTERS, SENT TO GOD EVERY DAY BY MY MOTHER, I GRADUATED BY THE SKIN OF MY TEETH. I WAS RELIEVED



IT WAS 1988 MARKUS HAD STARTED STUDYING THEATER. I HAD REGISTERED AT THE FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY, BUT I NEVER WENT



YOU DON'T WANT TO GO OUT?

I DON'T HAVE TIME, MY EXAMS ARE NEXT WEEK

THIS SAME YEAR, I BECAME AWARE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF AUSTRIA WAS NAMED KURT WALDHEIM.



THROUGH MARKUS, I HAD GOTTEN TO KNOW SOME OTHER STUDENTS. WE WOULD OFTEN GET TOGETHER AT THE CAFÉ HAWELKA, WHERE WE DISCUSSED POLITICS.



IT'S THE RETURN OF NAZISM, IT'S SERIOUS.

WE SHOULDN'T EXAGGERATE. WALDHEIM WAS ELECTED A YEAR AND A HALF AGO. IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY RADICAL CHANGES, WE WOULD HAVE KNOWN.

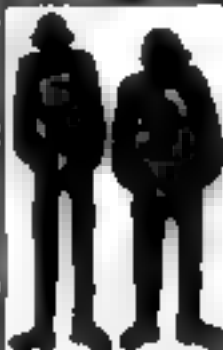
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? WE'VE GONE FROM SOCIALISM TO NAZI SM.



PERSONALLY, I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THIS DIFFERENCE THE FIRST TIME I SAW SKINHEADS WAS IN 1984. AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT IT MEANT AND DIDN'T SPEAK MUCH GERMAN. SO I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WANTED WITH ME. I SENSED THAT THEY WERE HOSTILE, BUT HAVING GROWN UP WITH THE GUARDIANS OF THE REVOLUTION, I KNEW WHAT TO DO IN THIS KIND OF SITUATION



I KEPT A LOW PROFILE.



SINCE THEN, I HADN'T NOTICED THEIR NUMBERS GROWING.

ASSHOLES, THEY'RE EVERYWHERE YOU THINK THAT THERE AREN'T ANY WHERE I COME FROM? THEY'RE TEN TIMES MORE FEARSOME THAN YOURS. IN IRAN, THEY KILL THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T THINK LIKE THE LEADERS!

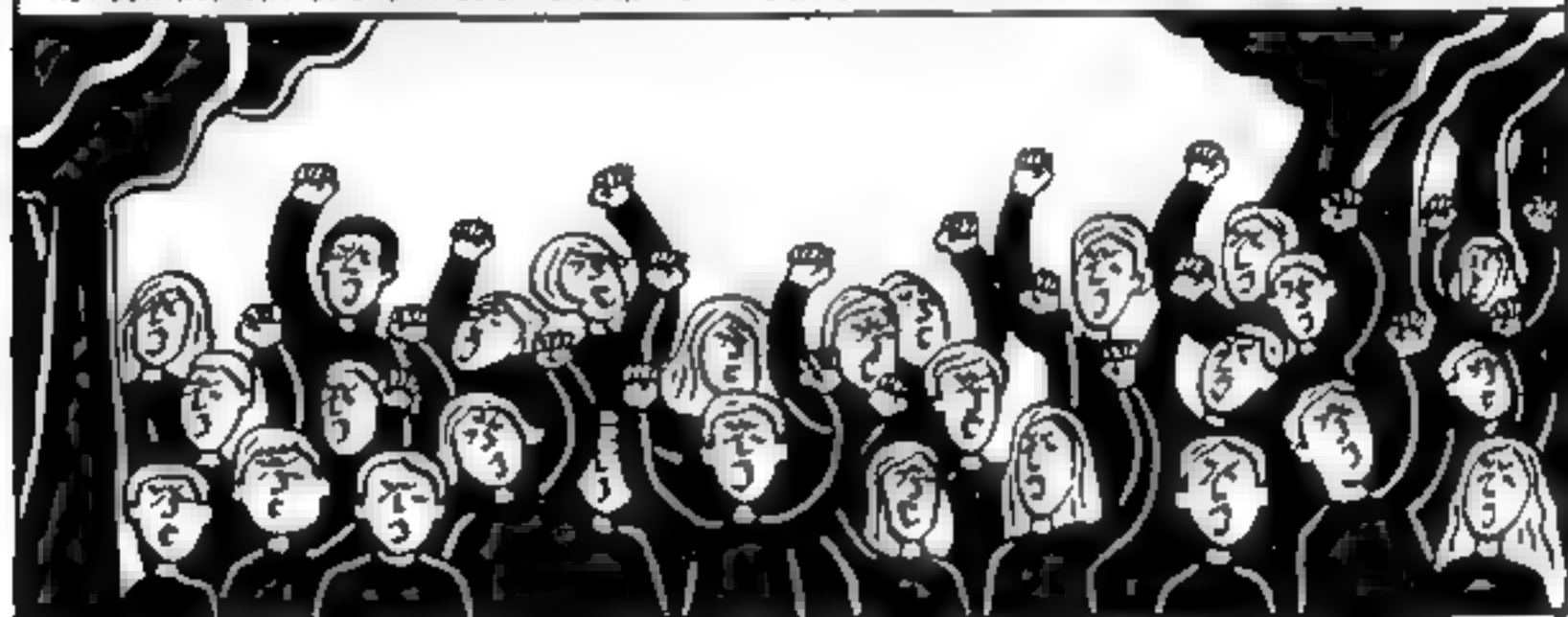


IT'S INTERESTING TO HAVE AN OUTSIDE OPINION.

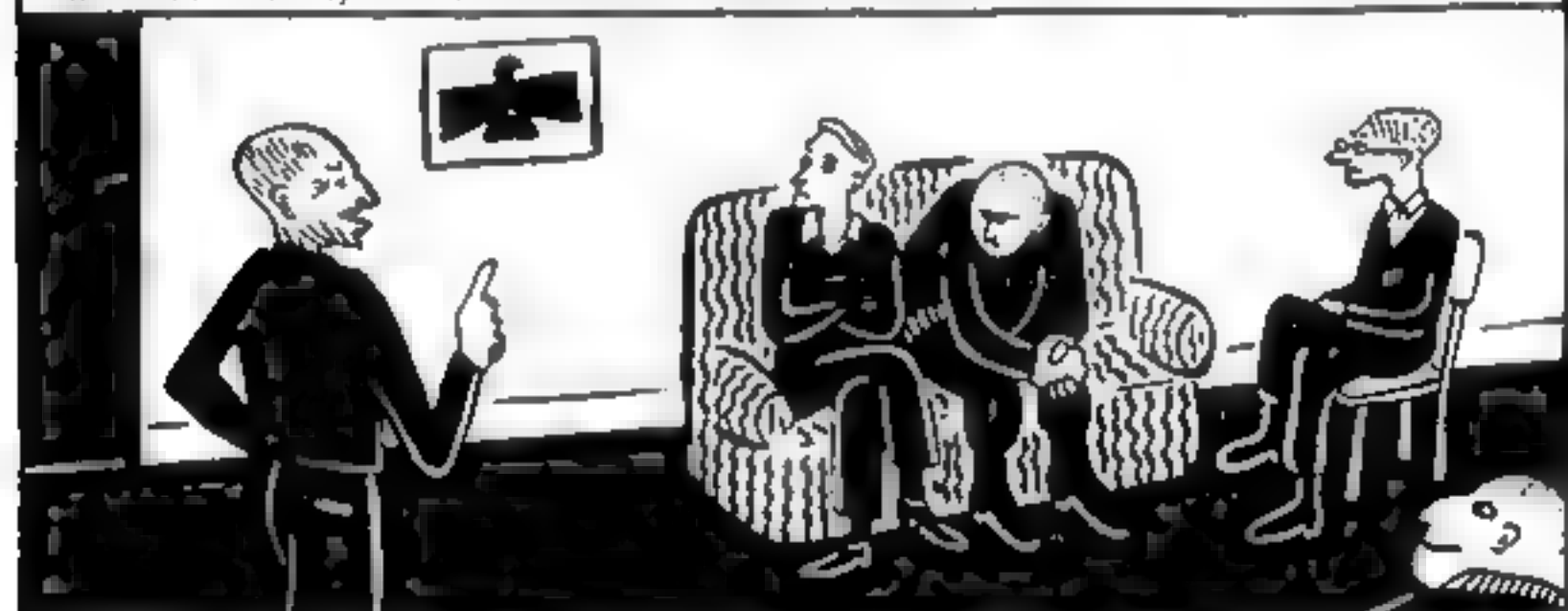
YES, IT'S TRUE.



DURING THIS PERIOD, THE STUDENTS IN QUESTION, LIKE MOST YOUNG VIENNESE, WERE VERY POLITICAL. THEY DEMONSTRATED EVERY SO OFTEN AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT IN POWER. SOMETIMES I JOINED THEM.



THEY SAID THAT THE OLD NAZIS HAD BEEN TEACHING "MEIN KAMPF" IN THEIR HOMES TO NEW NAZIS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE 80s, THAT SOON THERE WOULD BE A RISE IN THE EXTREME RIGHT THROUGHOUT EUROPE.



IT'S CRAZY HOW PEOPLE ARE ALL COWARDS. AND HERE WE ARE IN VIENNA. CAN YOU IMAGINE HOW IT MUST BE IN THE TYROL

BUT I'VE BEEN TO THE TYROL. THOUGHT THEY WERE VERY NICE



MY FRIEND'S FATHER EVEN MADE ME A FRAME



IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A GIRL. IF YOU WERE A BOY WITH FRIZZY HAIR AND YOUR SKIN WAS A LITTLE DARKER, IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN LIKE THAT



I ASKED MYSELF IF THEY WOULD HAVE SAT BESIDE ME IF I HAD BEEN A FRIZZY HAired AND DARK SKINNED BOY?







NEVERTHELESS HE, LIKE I TRIED  
TO SAVE OUR RELATIONSHIP WE  
HAD BEEN TOGETHER ALMOST  
TWO YEARS THE NIGHT BEFORE  
MY BIRTHDAY

I'VE BEEN INVITED TO  
GRAB BY A FRIEND

"WHAT'S  
GOOD

IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU THAT  
I WON'T BE CELEBRATING MY  
BIRTHDAY WITH YOU?

AS NO AT ALL

IT'LL BE GOOD FOR YOU.

IT WAS GOOD THING AFTER ALL  
MAYBE HIS VACATION WAS GOING  
TO SAVE OUR RELATIONSHIP

YOU'RE GOING TO MISS  
ME YOU'LL SEE

GOOD MORNING TO SLEEP AT  
YOUR HOUSE TONIGHT MY  
TRAIN IS AT 3.30 TOMORROW

WHAT WERE YOU TRYING  
TO SAY? THE STATION? WHEN YOU  
GO TO LEAVE YOU'LL  
MISS YOUR TRAIN

YES YOU'RE RIGHT

WHEN YOU GET BACK  
WE'LL CELEBRATE  
TOGETHER



SO I SLEPT AT MY HOUSE AND  
THE NEXT MORNING...



MISSED MY TRAIN.



THIS MUST BE DESTINY'S SIGN  
THAT I SHOULD CELEBRATE  
TURNING EIGHTEEN WITH HIM.



I HAD AN INGENIOUS IDEA: "I  
AM GOING TO SURPRISE HIM  
BY BRINGING HIM HOT  
CROISSANTS."



OH YEAH,  
I'M JUST TOO COOL!



I TURNED THE KEY IN THE  
LOCK DELICATELY, NOT TO  
WAKE HIM, TO BETTER  
SURPRISE HIM.







IT WAS LIKE A BAD AMERICAN MOVIE  
ONE OF THOSE FILMS WHERE THE  
SURPRISED MAN WRAPS HIMSELF  
IN A SHEET OUT OF MODESTY AND  
SAYS

WAIT, CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING



IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK



LOVE YOU MARIANE, YOU  
MUST BELIEVE ME I LOVE YOU



BASTARD,  
ASSHOLE,  
SHITFACE



IF THAT'S HOW IT'S GET  
OUT! GO ON BEAT IT!



SO BY ORDER OF THE  
TRAITEROUS MARKUS I BEAT  
IT I NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN.





# THE VEIL

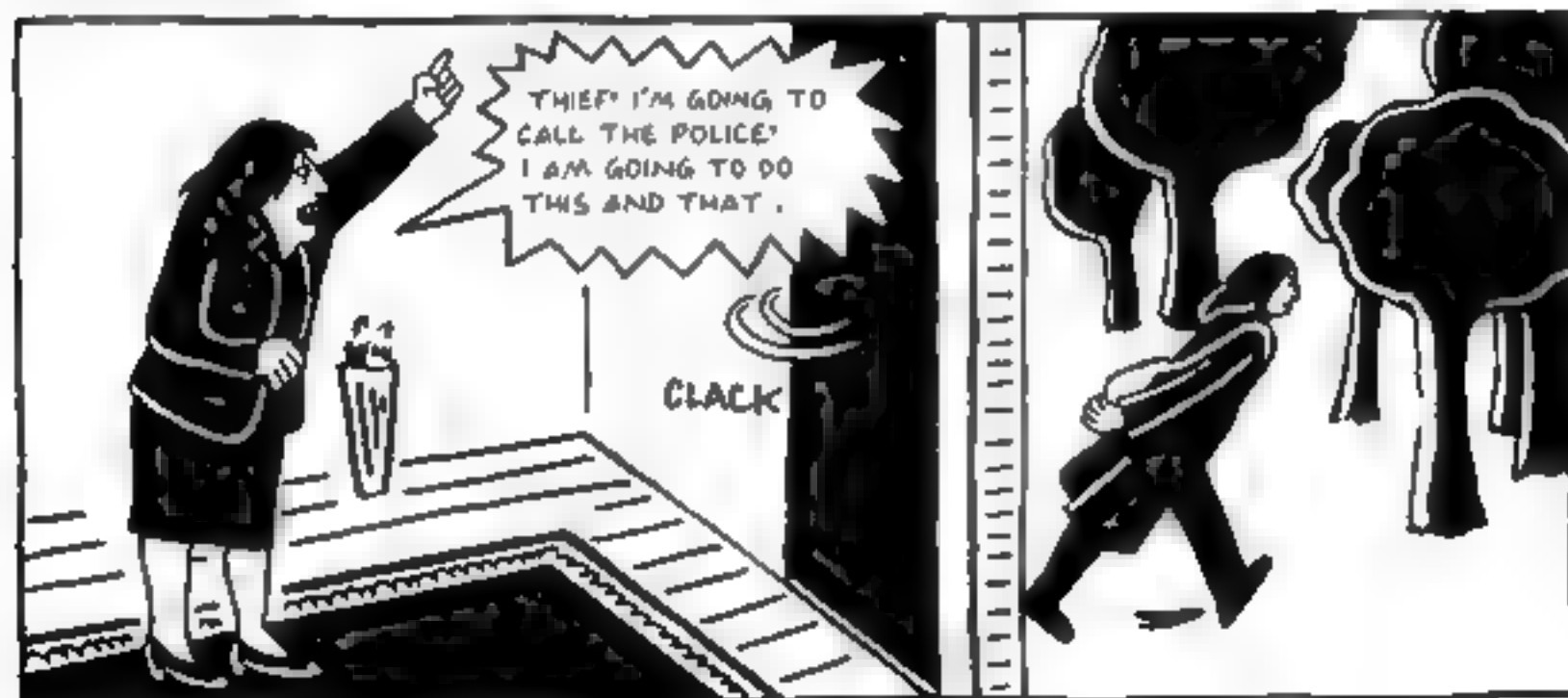
MY BREAKUP WITH MARKUS REPRESENTED MORE THAN A SIMPLE SEPARATION. I HAD JUST LOST MY ONE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, THE ONLY PERSON WHO CARED FOR ME, AND TO WHOM I WAS ALSO WHOLLY ATTACHED



I HAD NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS. I HAD COUNTED ON THIS RELATIONSHIP FOR EVERYTHING THE WORLD HAD JUST CRUMBLING IN FRONT OF MY EYES









IT WAS NOVEMBER 22. MY BIRTHDAY. IT WAS BITTERLY COLD. I STAYED ON A BENCH, IMMOBILE  
WATCHED THE PEOPLE GOING TO WORK



THEN COMING BACK



NIGHT FELL

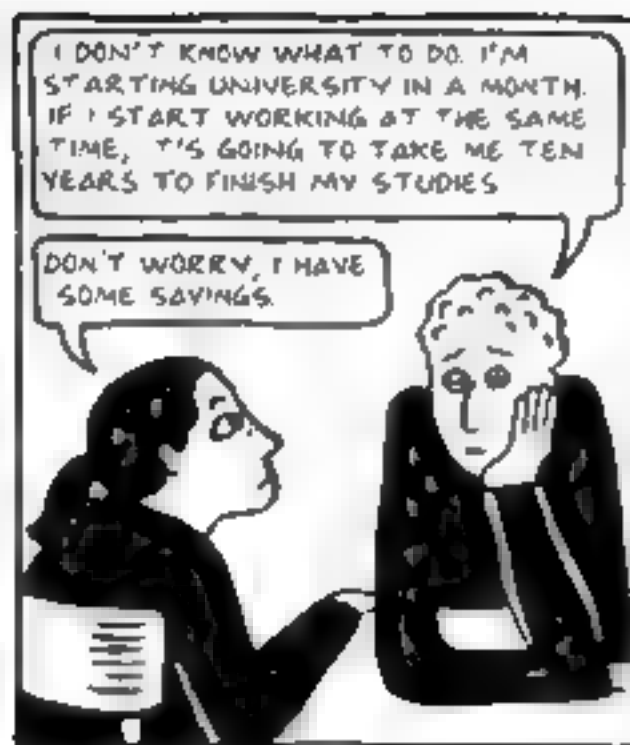


"NIGHT BRINGS GOOD COUNSEL," MY GRANDMOTHER ALWAYS TOLD ME.











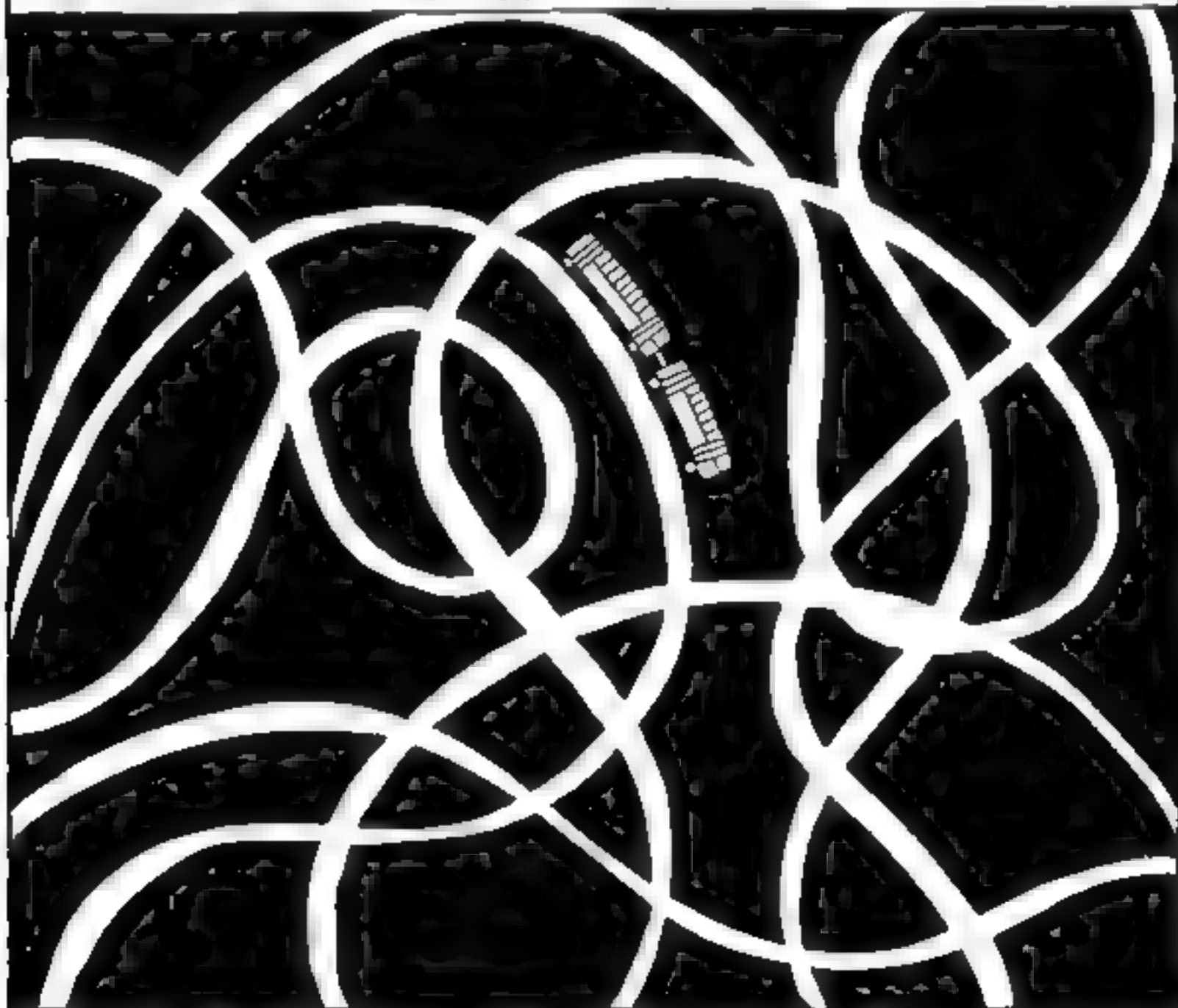
IN THE MORNING, I TOOK THE TRAM.



INSIDE, THERE WERE TWO SPOTS THAT WERE VERY WARM, BECAUSE THEY WERE ABOVE THE MOTOR. I FELL ASLEEP ON ONE OF THESE SEATS. IT WAS PEACEFUL.



FOR ALMOST A MONTH, I LIVED AT THIS RHYTHM THE NIGHT PROSTRATE AND THE DAY LETTING MYSELF BE CARRIED ACROSS VIENNA BY SLEEP AND THE TRAMWAY





VERY QUICKLY, MY SAVINGS VANISHED. I WAS BROKE.



IT'S INCREDIBLE HOW QUICKLY YOU CAN LOSE YOUR DIGNITY I FOUND MYSELF SMOKING BUTTS,

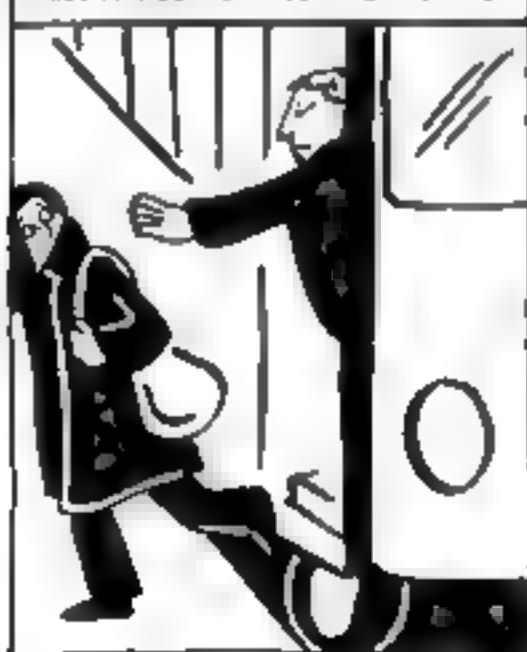


LOOKING FOR FOOD IN TRASH CANS.



I, WHO BEFORE COULDN'T EVEN TASTE FROM OTHERS' PLATES.

SOON, I WAS RECOGNIZED AND THROWN OUT OF ALL THE TRAMS.



SO I HAD TO FIND A WELL-HIDDEN PLACE TO SLEEP AT NIGHT NIGHTS ON THE STREET COULD END VERY BADLY FOR A YOUNG GIRL LIKE ME.



I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE MY ENTIRE EXISTENCE HAD BEEN PLANNED AROUND MARKUS. IT'S SURELY FOR THIS REASON THAT I FOUND MYSELF WANDERING LIKE THIS

IT WAS UNTHINKABLE THAT I GO BACK TO SEE ZOZO

I DON'T CARE. OUR APARTMENT IS TOO SMALL.



NOR INGRID

YOU DROPPED US FOR A GUY WHO WASN'T EVEN WORTH IT



AS FOR FRAU DOCTOR HELLER, LET'S NOT EVEN TALK ABOUT HER. SHE REPRESENTED ABSOLUTE EVIL IN MY EYES.









I WOKE UP IN A HOSPITAL. IT WAS A MIRACLE. IF I HAD FAINTED DURING THE NIGHT, NO ONE WOULD HAVE NOTICED AND THE GLACIAL COLD WOULD SURELY HAVE PREVENTED ME FROM FULFILLING MY DESTINY.

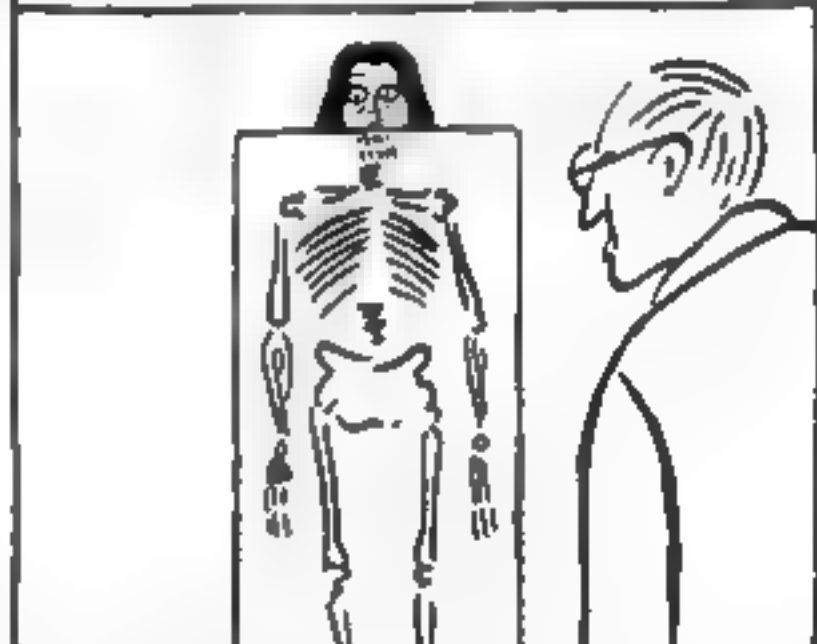


I HAD KNOWN A REVOLUTION THAT HAD MADE ME LOSE PART OF MY FAMILY.

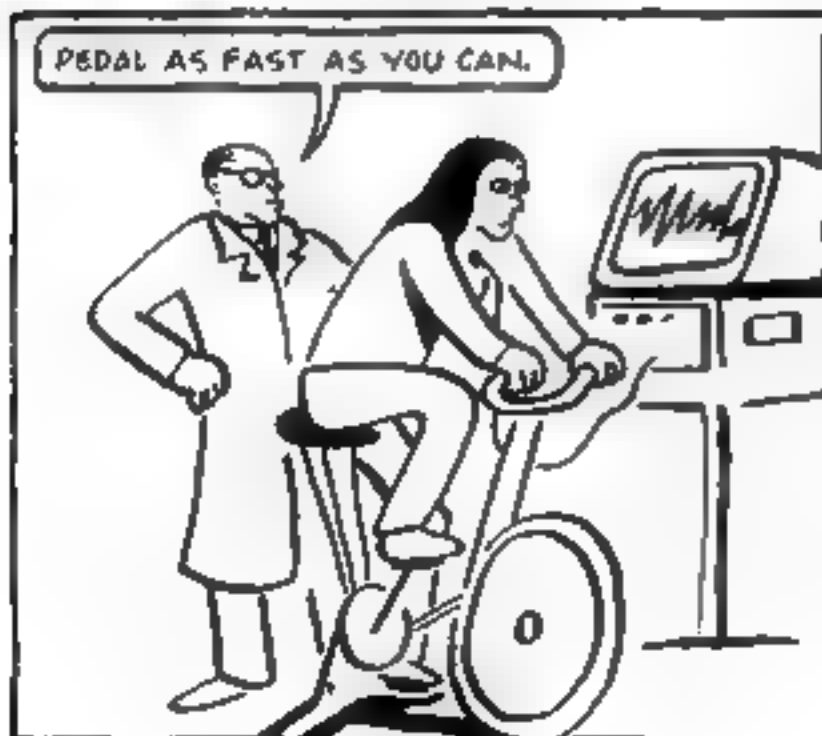
BREATHE, BREATHE



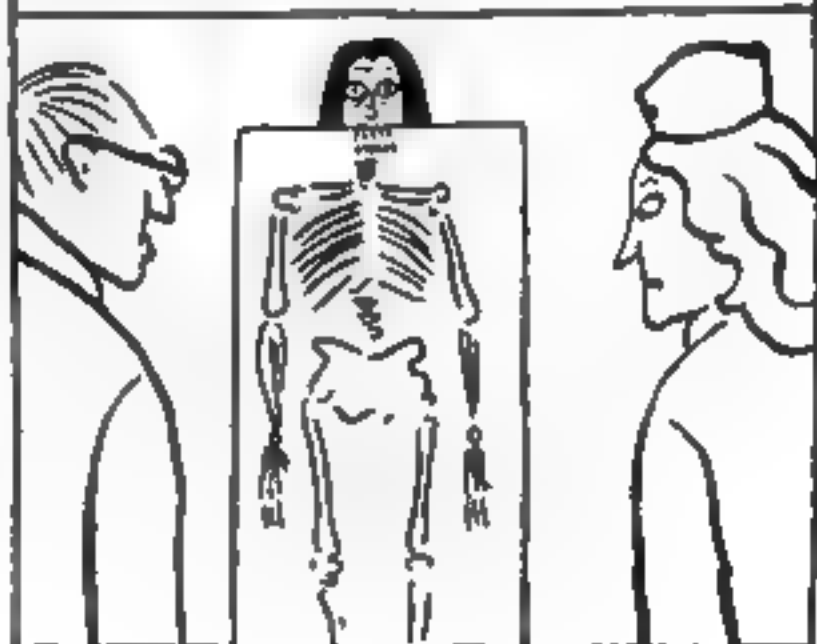
I HAD SURVIVED A WAR THAT HAD DISTANCED ME FROM MY COUNTRY AND MY PARENTS . .



PEDAL AS FAST AS YOU CAN.



... AND IT'S A BANAL STORY OF LOVE THAT ALMOST CARRIED ME AWAY.











MY FATHER'S VOICE WAS SOFT AND SOOTHING:

- DAD, IT'S YOU?
- MY DARLING, WE LOOKED FOR YOU EVERYWHERE
- CAN I COME BACK?
- OF COURSE, WHAT A QUESTION.
- DAD, PROMISE ME TO NEVER ASK ME ANYTHING ABOUT THESE THREE MONTHS.
- I PROMISE YOU .. HERE'S YOUR MOTHER.

MY MOTHER'S VOICE WAS TENDER, TOO.

- I AM VERY HAPPY.
- MOM, PLEASE, DON'T CRY
- THESE ARE TEARS OF JOY
- MOM.
- COME HOME, DARLING, WE ARE WAITING FOR YOU .
- MOM
- NO ONE WILL ASK YOU ANY QUESTIONS. IT'S A PROMISE.



BEFORE MY DEPARTURE,  
I WENT BY FRAU  
DOCTOR HELLER'S.



I CAME TO GET  
MY THINGS.



HERE THEY ARE!

WHERE  
IS  
THE  
REST?

THERE IS NO REST.  
THE REST WILL  
COMPENSATE THE  
BROCH THAT YOU  
STOLE FROM ME.

I DIDN'T SAY ANY-  
THING. IN ANY CASE,  
I COULDN'T TAKE  
FOUR YEARS OF MY  
LIFE BACK WITH ME



I FOUND AN INEXPENSIVE  
HOTEL. I HAD FIVE DAYS AHEAD  
OF ME, BEFORE THE NEXT  
FLIGHT TO TEHRAN.



I FINALLY FOUND A PLACE OF  
MY OWN, SOME PRIVACY.



DESPITE THE DOCTOR'S ORDERS,  
I BOUGHT MYSELF SEVERAL  
CARTONS OF CIGARETTES



YOU ARE PUTTING YOURSELF IN SERIOUS DANGER.



I THINK THAT I  
PREFERRED TO PUT  
MYSELF IN SERIOUS  
DANGER RATHER  
THAN CONFRONT  
MY SHAME. MY  
SHAME AT NOT  
HAVING BECOME  
SOMEONE, THE  
SHAME OF NOT  
HAVING MADE  
MY PARENTS  
PROUD  
AFTER  
ALL THE  
SACRIFICES  
THEY HAD MADE  
FOR ME. THE  
SHAME OF HAVING  
BECOME A MEDIOCRE  
Nihilist



THE FIVE DAYS PASSED LIKE  
THE WIND AND THE CIGA-  
RETTES DIDN'T GET THE BET-  
TER OF ME. I GOT DRESSED,



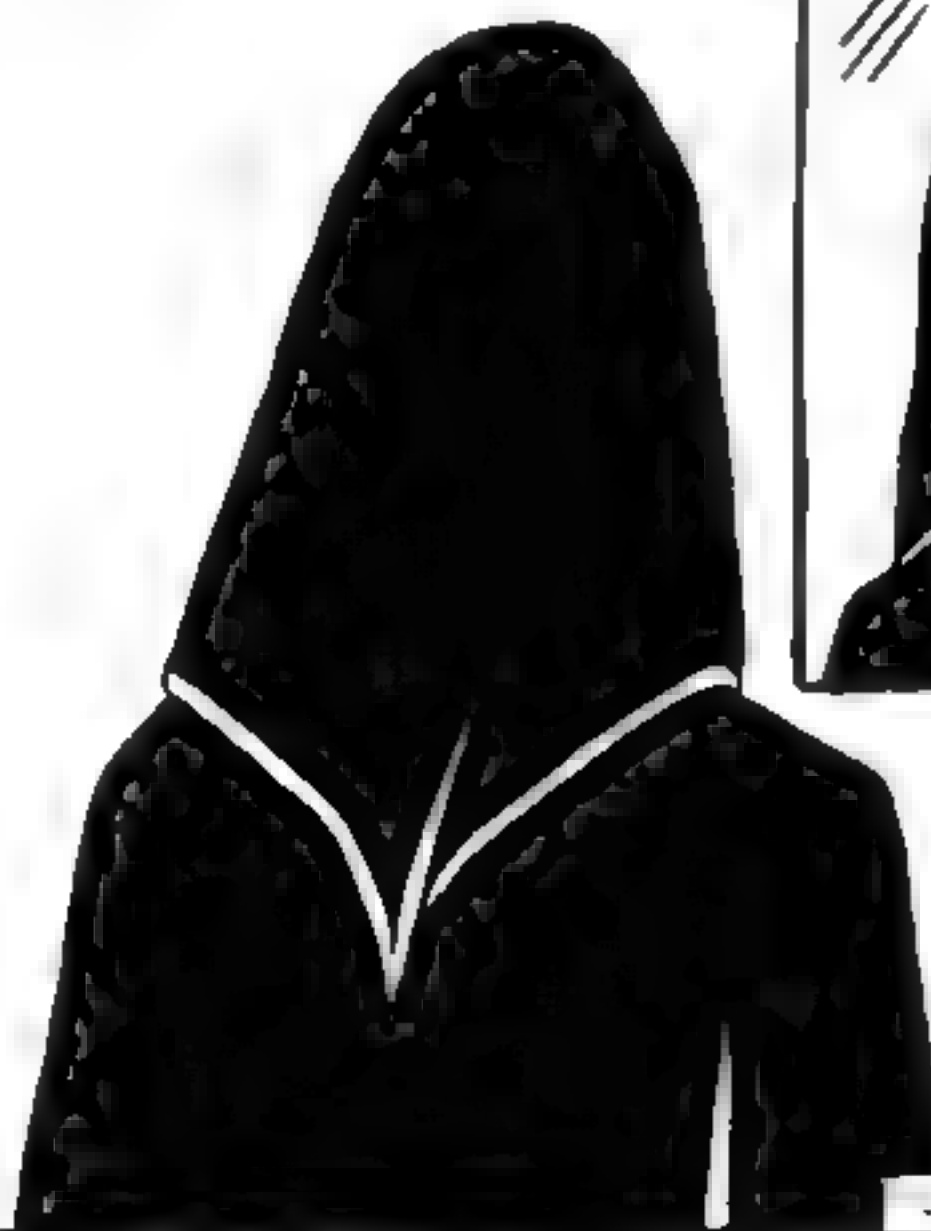
I PACKED MY BAG .



I AGAIN PUT ON MY VEIL



AND SO MUCH FOR MY INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL LIBERTIES .



. I NEEDED SO BADLY TO GO HOME



# THE RETURN

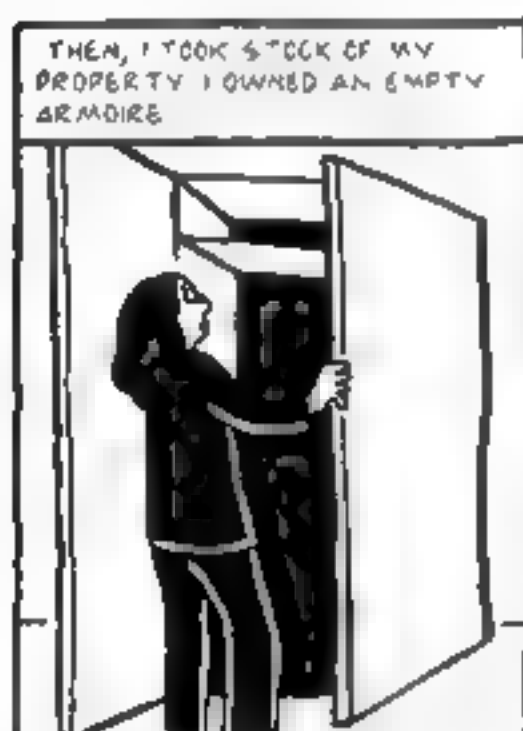
AFTER FOUR YEARS LIVING IN VIENNA HERE I'M BACK IN "EHRAN" FROM THE MOMENT I ARRIVED AT MEHRABAD AIRPORT AND CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE FIRST CUSTOMS AGENT I IMMEDIATELY FELT THE REPRESSIVE AIR OF MY COUNTRY











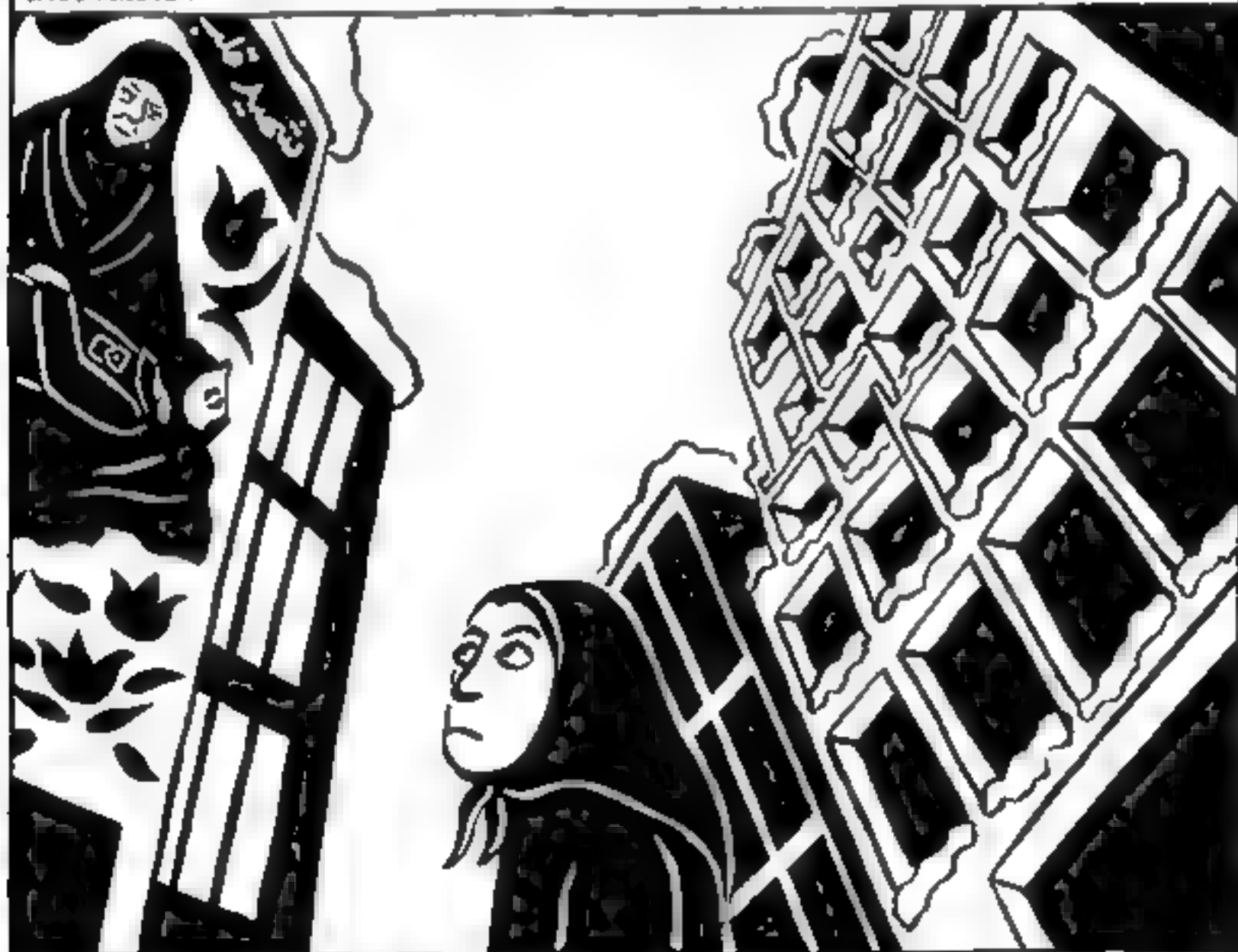








IT WASN'T JUST THE VEIL TO WHICH I HAD TO READJUST. THERE WERE ALSO ALL THE IMAGES, THE SIXTY FIVE-FOOT-HIGH MURALS PRESENTING MARTYRS, ADORNED WITH SLOGANS HONORING THEM. SLOGANS LIKE "THE MARTYR IS THE HEART OF HISTORY" OR "I HOPE TO BE A MARTYR MYSELF" OR "A MARTYR LIVES FOREVER."



ESPECIALLY AFTER FOUR YEARS SPENT IN AUSTRIA, WHERE YOU WERE MORE LIKELY TO SEE ON THE WALLS "BEST SAUSAGES FOR 20 SHILLINGS," THE ROAD "O READTUS" WENT SEEMED VERY LONG TO ME.



THERE WERE ALSO THE STREETS



MANY HAD CHANGED NAMES  
THEY WERE NOW CALLED MARTYR  
WHAT'S-HIS-NAME AVENUE OR  
MARTYR SOMETHING OR OTHER  
STREET



IT WAS VERY UNSETTLING.



FELT AS THOUGH I WERE WALKING THROUGH A CEMETERY



SURROUNDED BY THE  
VICTIMS OF A WAR I HAD FLED.



IT WAS UNBEARABLE. I HURRIED  
HOME







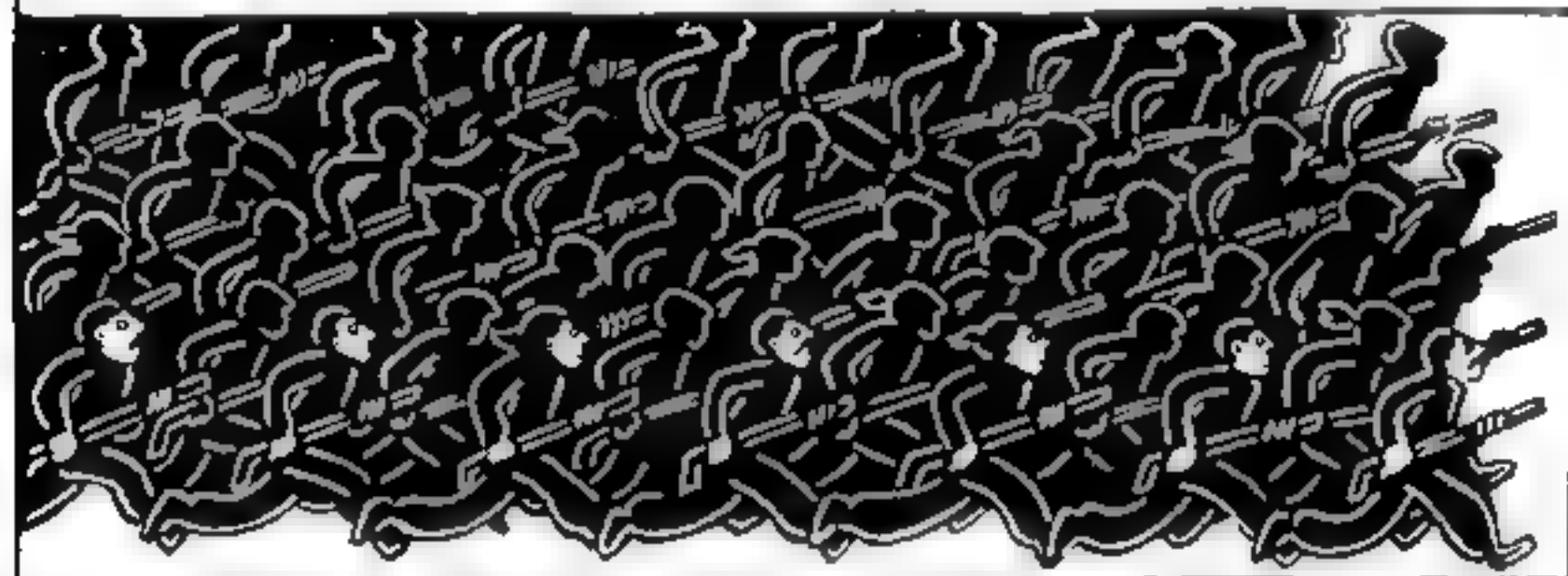








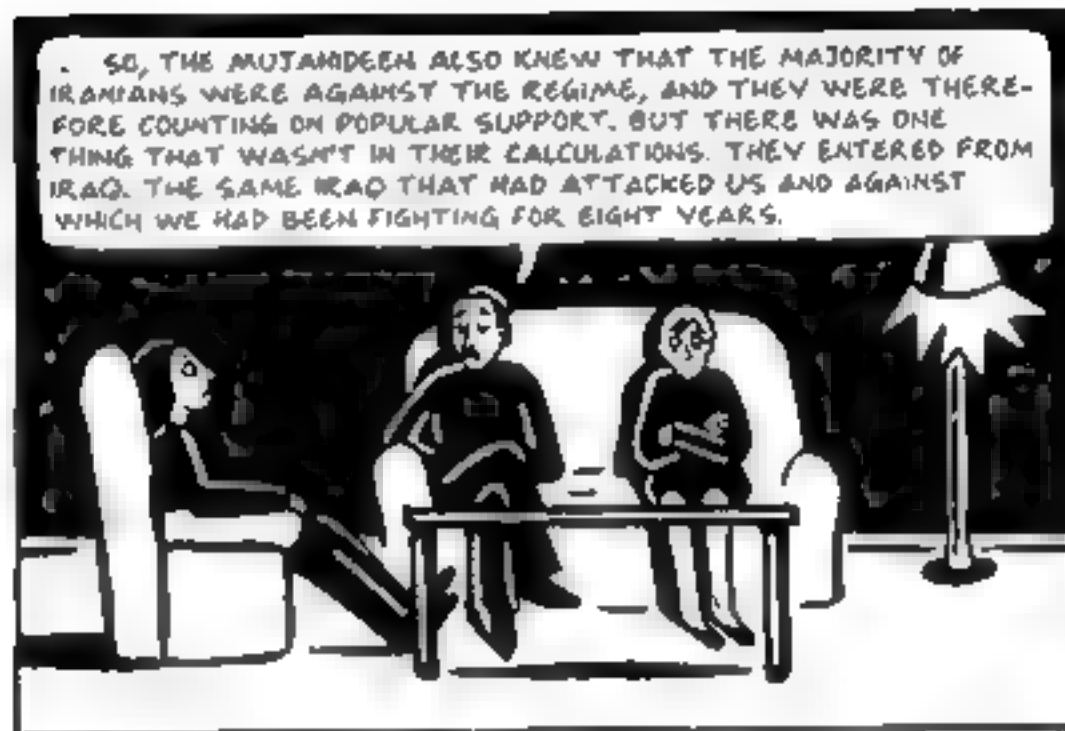
THE PEACE HADN'T YET BEEN ANNOUNCED WHEN THE ARMED GROUPS OPPOSED TO "THE ISLAMIC REGIME" THE IRANIAN MUJAHIDEEN, ENTERED THE COUNTRY FROM THE IRAQ BORDER WITH THE SUPPORT OF SADDAM HUSSEIN TO LIBERATE IRAN FROM THE HANDS OF ITS FUNDAMENTALIST LEADERS.



\*THE TERM "MUJAHIDEEN" ISN'T SPECIFIC TO AFGHANISTAN IT MEANS A COMBATANT









R "HEY WOUL'D BE EXECUTED"



AND WELL, YES, IF THAT WERE EXECUTED



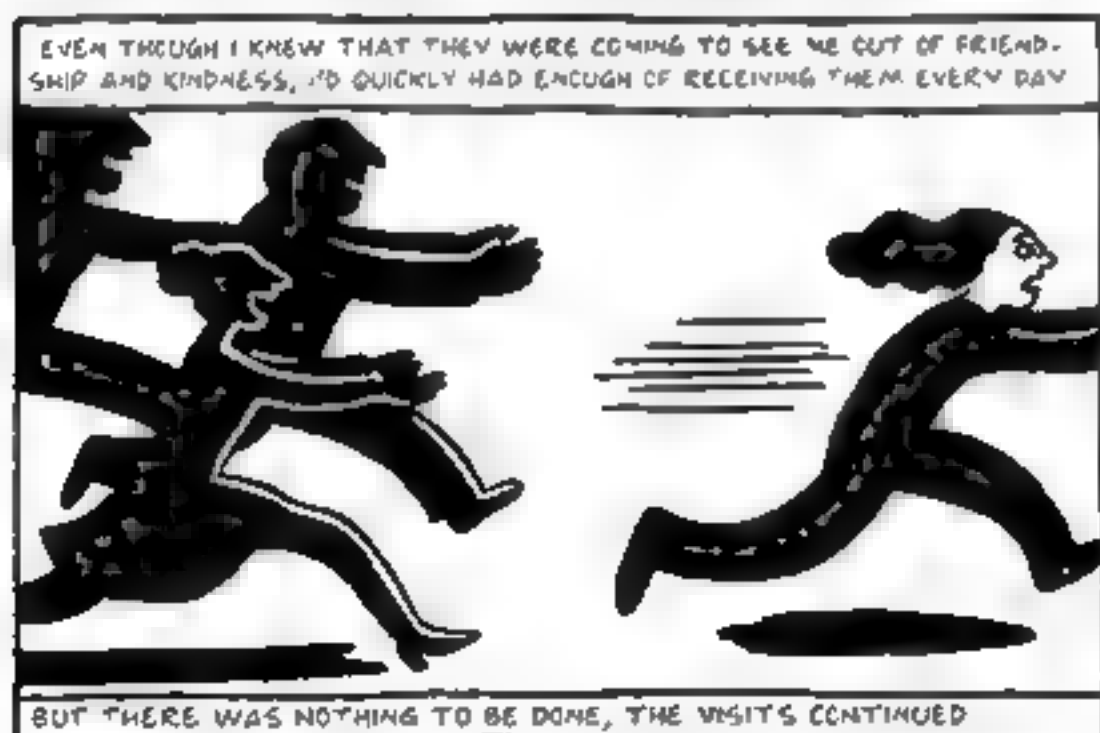






# THE JOKE

I HAD BEEN IN TEHRAN FOR TEN DAYS. DESPITE MY RELUCTANCE, IN THE END MY ENTIRE FAMILY CAME TO SEE ME. I DIDN'T KNOW WHETHER OR NOT THEY KNEW ABOUT MY EUROPEAN FAILURE. I WAS SCARED THAT THEY WOULD BE DISAPPOINTED





AFTER MY FAMILY, IT WAS MY FRIENDS' TURN. I HAD FEWER APPREHENSIONS ABOUT THEM. WE WERE THE SAME AGE, WHICH SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER TO CONNECT.



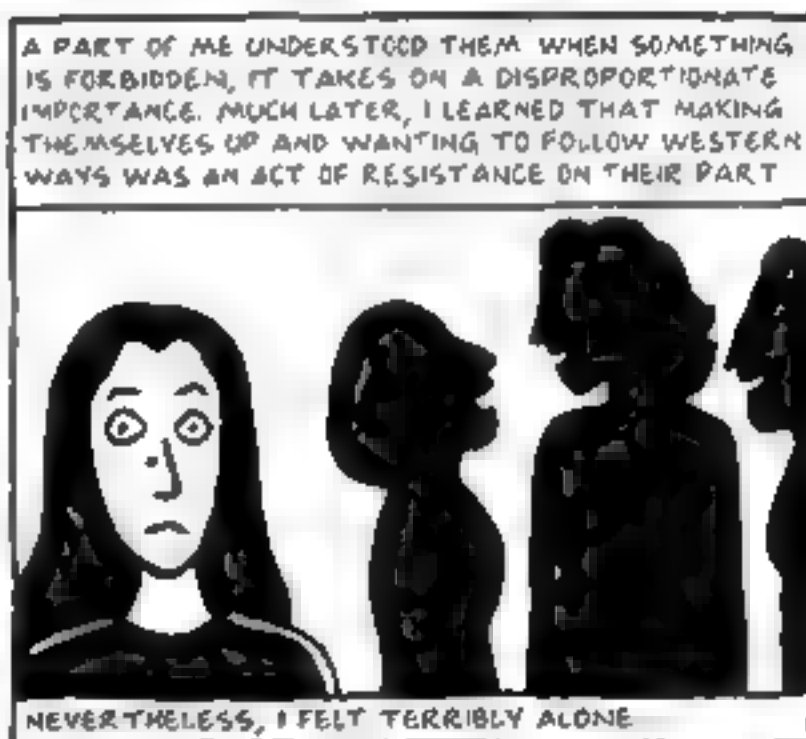
I WAS WRONG. THEY ALL LOOKED LIKE THE HEROINES OF AMERICAN TV SERIES, READY TO GET MARRIED AT THE DROP OF A HAT, IF THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF



COMPARED TO HER FASHIONABLE MAKEUP, I REALLY DID EXUDE ALL THE ALLURE OF A NUN.



I HAD A HARD TIME REMEMBERING WHAT HAD BROUGHT US TOGETHER BEFORE



NEVERTHELESS, I FELT TERRIBLY ALONE



SOME DAYS LATER.

JALEH CALLED FOR YOU.

DEFF

OH! MY FRIENDS MY FRIENDS. I FIND THEM ALL SO UNBEARABLY INANE

YOU KNOW, IT'S NOT ENTIRELY THEIR FAULT IF ONE IS ASKING THEM TO BE 'INTELLIGENT' COMPLETELY THE OPPOSITE IN FACT!

GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT MY CHILD THERE MUST BE SOME PEOPLE THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SPEND TIME WITH

GRANDMA WAS RIGHT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY HAPPY TO SEE THE KIDS I USED TO PLAY WITH IN THE STREET

I'D LIKE TO SEE ARASH AND KIA AGAIN

YES! ARASH AND KIA KIA ESPECIALLY WE HAD SO MUCH FUN TOGETHER. AND, HE'S A GUY HE MUST HAVE SOMETHING OTHER THAN MAKE UP ON HIS MIND.

MY MOTHER'S RESPONSE SEEMED NORMAL SHE NEVER REALLY LIKED HIM SHE 'THOUGHT' THAT HE WAS BADLY BROUGHT UP AND ENCOURAGED ME TO DO STUPID THINGS

MOM, DON'T WORRY WE'RE ALL GROWN UP NOW IF I SEE HIM, WE'RE NOT GOING TO BREAK WINDOWS, OR ATTACK PEOPLE WITH NAILS.

IT'S JUST THAT KIA

KIA WHAT?

WELL, HE WAS CALLED UP FOR SERVICE BUT HE PREFERRED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY ILLEGALLY

AND WHERE DID HE GO?

NOWHERE THEY ARRESTED HIM THEN, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, HE WAS REQUIRED TO DO HIS MILITARY SERVICE THEY SENT HIM TO THE FRONT AND

AND THEN WHAT? IS HE DEAD?

ALMOST

ALMOST DEAD???

YES WELL HOW DO YOU SAY HE'S DISABLED















HE ENDED UP LANDING IN A GOOD HOSPITAL THERE, THE DOCTORS SET THEMSELVES TO STICKING THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER. THEY STITCHED AND STITCHED



AND FINALLY, AFTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTY OPERATIONS AND A YEAR AND A HALF OF BANDAGES



HE BECAME, ONCE AGAIN, A WHOLE MAN.

OH, DOCTOR. I'VE NEVER FELT SO GOOD. THANKS TO YOU, I CAN BEGIN A NEW LIFE.



TO HELP HIM LEAD HIS NEW LIFE, HIS FAMILY DECIDED TO FIND HIM A WIFE. HIS MOTHER DID THE ROUNDS OF THEIR FRIENDS AND THE NEIGHBORS AND FOUND A RARE PEARL AND AS TRADITION REQUIRES, THE MAN, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS FAMILY, WENT TO ASK FOR THE YOUNG GIRL'S HAND



OUR SON IS EXCEPTIONAL

OUR DAUGHTER IS MAGNIFICENT!

AFTER LONG NEGOTIATIONS OVER THE AMOUNT OF THE DOWRY,\* THE WEDDING RINGS, THE DRESS THE FLOWERS, THE HAIRDRESSER, THE MAKEUP ARTIST, THE WEDDING VIDEO CREW, THE CATERERS, THE WAITERS, THE MUSICIANS, THE NUMBER OF GUESTS, THE TWO FAMILIES REACHED AN AGREEMENT



IT IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DAY OF MY LIFE.

I'LL LOVE YOU FOREVER



\*IN IRAN IT'S THE HUSBAND WHO MUST PAY HIS WIFE A DOWRY











# SKIING





I THOUGHT THAT BY COMING BACK TO IRAN, EVERYTHING WOULD BE FINE



THAT I WOULD FORGET THE OLD DAYS



BUT MY PAST CAUGHT UP WITH ME



MY SECRETS WEIGHED ME DOWN.



I BECAME DEPRESSED.

MARJI I'M GOING GROCERY SHOPPING DO YOU NEED ANYTHING?

CIGARETTES, PLEASE



I RENTED "LA DOLCE VITA" DON'T YOU WANT TO WATCH IT TOGETHER?

NO



EVEN MY GRANDMA COULD NO LONGER GET ME TO LAUGH.

HE FARTED! IT SMELLED LIKE A DEAD RAT



I WAS ALWAYS IN FRONT OF THE TV THERE WAS A JAPANESE SERIES CALLED "OSHIN," THAT I WATCHED OFTEN IT WAS THE STORY OF A POOR GIRL WHO CAME TO WORK IN TOKYO



AT FIRST SHE CLEANED HOUSES THEN SHE BECAME A HAIRDRESSER AND MET A GUY WHOSE MOTHER WAS OPPOSED TO THEIR MARRIAGE

YOU ARE NOT HERE BUT A HAIRDRESSER YOU AREN'T WORTHY OF MY SON GET UP

NO LIVE NOW



MUCH LATER I GOT TO KNOW A GIRL WHO DUBBED TELEVISION SHOWS SHE TOLD ME THAT OSHIN WAS IN FACT A GEISHA AND SINCE HER PROFESSION DIDN'T SUIT ISLAMIC MORALS, THE DIRECTOR OF THE CHANNEL HAD DECIDED THAT SHE'D BE A HAIRDRESSER



IT WAS BELIEVABLE BECAUSE OSHIN AND HER COURTESAN FRIENDS SPENT THEIR TIME MAKING CHIGNONS.



TO LIFT ME OUT OF MY DEPRESSION, MY FRIENDS SUGGESTED TAKING ME SKIING. ONE OF THE PARENTS HAD A CHALET AT DIZIN.\* I DIDN'T WANT TO GO, BUT MY MOTHER INSISTED SO MUCH THAT I ENDED UP ACCEPTING.



\* A SKI RESORT ABOUT THIRTY MILES FROM TEHRAN

YOU KNOW, YOU CAN RENT EQUIPMENT IF YOU WANT, WE CAN TEACH YOU HOW TO SKI.



NO, THANKS, I AM VERY HAPPY LIKE THIS.

ACTUALLY I FELT ON TOP OF THE WORLD THE MOUNTAIN, THE BLUE SKY THE SUN, ALL OF IT SUITED ME LITTLE BY LITTLE MY HEAD AND MY SPIRIT TOOK ON SOME COLOR

















SO I WAITED UNTIL MY WRIST  
HEALED TO SWALLOW ALL MY  
ANTI-DEPRESSANTS.



I TOLD MYSELF THAT IT WAS THE  
LAST TIME I WOULD SEE THE  
SUN. I ALSO SPORED A THOUGHT  
FOR MY PARENTS.



IT WAS THE END



THREE DAYS LATER



IT'S MY HAND SHIT!  
I'M STILL ALIVE!



WHEN I WOKE UP, THE DRUGS THAT I HAD TAKEN  
GAVE ME SEVERAL HOURS' WORTH OF HALLUCINATIONS.



SO I WENT TO SEE MY THERAPIST

YOU SWALLOWED THEM ALL? ARE YOU SURE?

YES...

THAT DOSE SHOULD HAVE  
BEEN ENOUGH TO FINISH  
OFF AN ELEPHANT! ...  
EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT A  
BELIEVER, AS DE FROM  
DIVINE INTERVENTION, I  
CAN'T FIND ANY OTHER  
EXPLANATION FOR YOUR  
SURVIVAL.



I INFERRED FROM THIS THAT I  
WAS NOT MADE TO DIE

FROM NOW ON, I'M  
TAKING MYSELF IN HAND.





BODY HAIR BEING AN OBSESSION OF THE ORIENTAL WOMAN, I BEGAN WITH HAIR REMOVAL



THEN I GOT RID OF MY OLD CLOTHES.



AND HAD SOME NEW CLOTHES MADE



A MODERN WARDROBE



ORIGINAL SHOES



A FASHIONABLE HAIRCUT



A PERMANENT



BECAME A SOPHISTICATED WOMAN



SHOPPING.



MAKEUP





AND AS A HEALTHY MIND IS  
FOUND IN A HEALTHY BODY, I  
TOOK UP EXERCISE



MORE AND MORE,



AND MORE AND MORE,



TO THE POINT WHERE I BECAME AN AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR

AND FIVE AND SIX...  
AND ONE AND TWO...



STRONG AND INVINCIBLE LIKE THIS, I WAS GOING TO MEET MY NEW DESTINY



ASIDE FROM THE LADY OF THE HOUSE DIDN'T KNOW ANYONE

"ARE YA HOW ARE YOU?"

AND YOURSELF?



CAN I S... DOWN?

PLEASE DO

WHAT DO YOU DO?

I AM AN AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR ALSO "EACH FRENCH

HAVE YOU LIVED IN FRANCE?

IN AUSTRIA, BUT STUDIED AT THE LYCEE FRANÇAIS IN TEHRAN AND IN VIENNA.

WERE YOU AT THE LYCEE RAZ?

YES, WERE YOU, TOO?

NO, NOT ME, MY FRIENDS.

A black and white comic panel. On the left, a man with dark hair is shown in profile, smoking a cigarette. He is wearing a dark jacket. On the right, a woman with dark hair is looking towards him. A speech bubble from her contains the text "AND YOU? WHAT DO YOU DO?". The background is dark and indistinct.

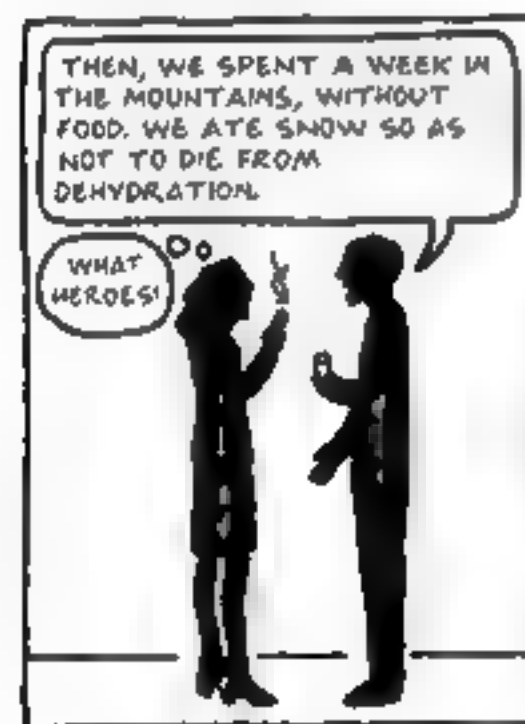




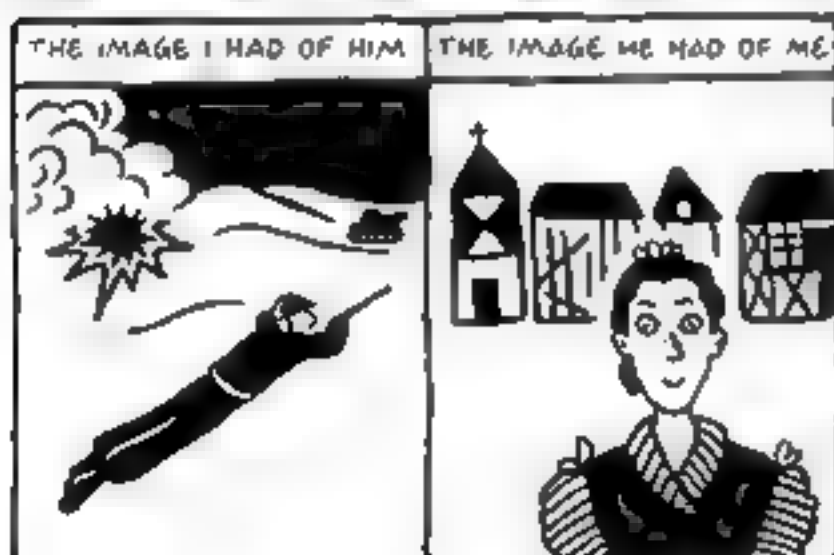
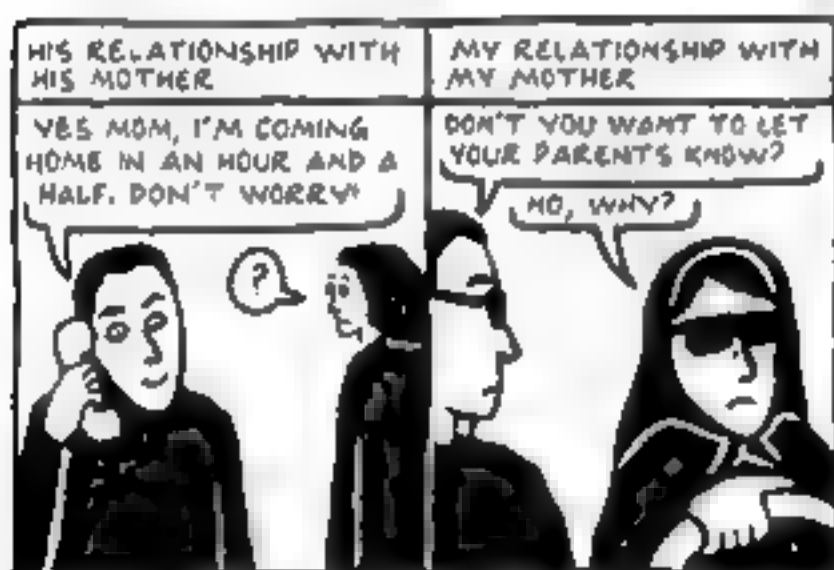
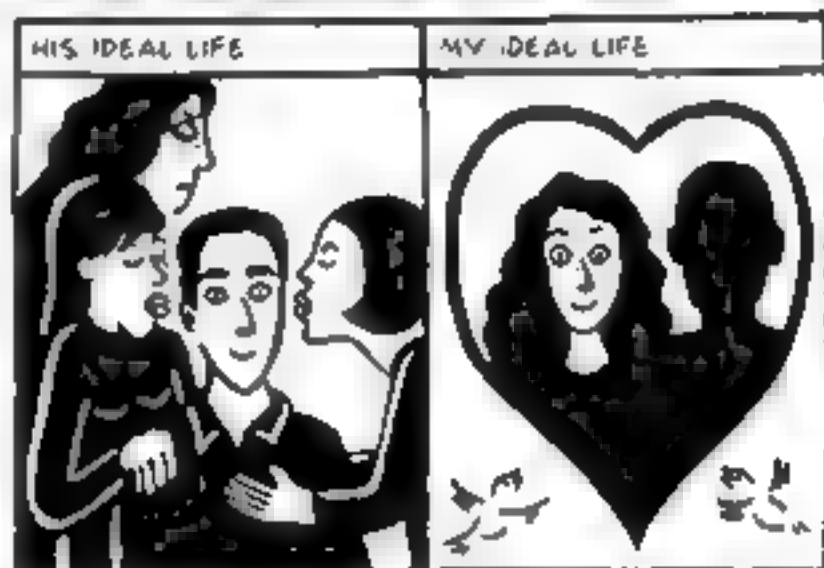




\*A MOUNTAIN CHAIN IN THE WEST OF IRAN









WE NEEDED EACH OTHER SO MUCH THAT WE VERY QUICKLY STARTED TO TALK ABOUT OUR SHARED FUTURE

WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE?

I WANT TO LEAVE HERE EITHER I'LL GO TO EUROPE OR TO THE UNITED STATES, BUT I WON'T STAY HERE



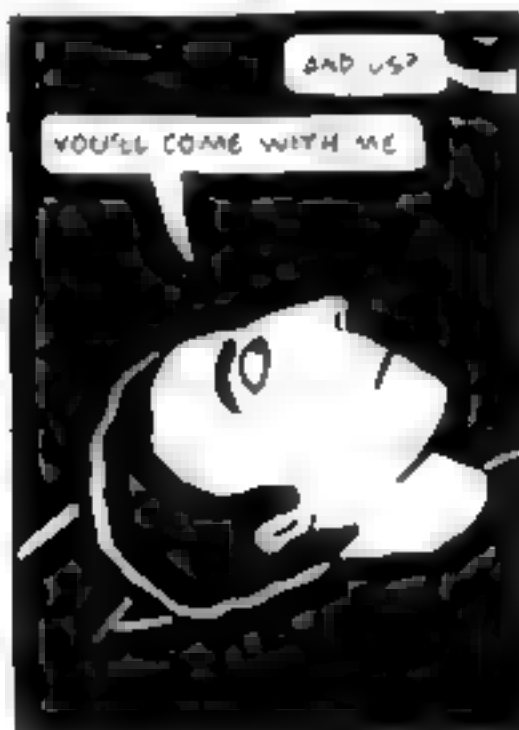
WHERE WILL YOU GO IN EUROPE?

ITALY, FRANCE, SWEDEN, SPAIN, ENGLAND - DOESN'T REALLY MATTER I JUST DON'T WANT TO LIVE IN IRAN ANYMORE



AND US?

YOU'LL COME WITH ME



I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY RIGHT AWAY

IT'S BECAUSE YOU ARE STILL NOSTALGIC YOU'LL SEE A YEAR FROM NOW PEOPLE WILL REGRET YOU ALWAYS INTERFERING IN THINGS THAT DON'T CONCERN THEM

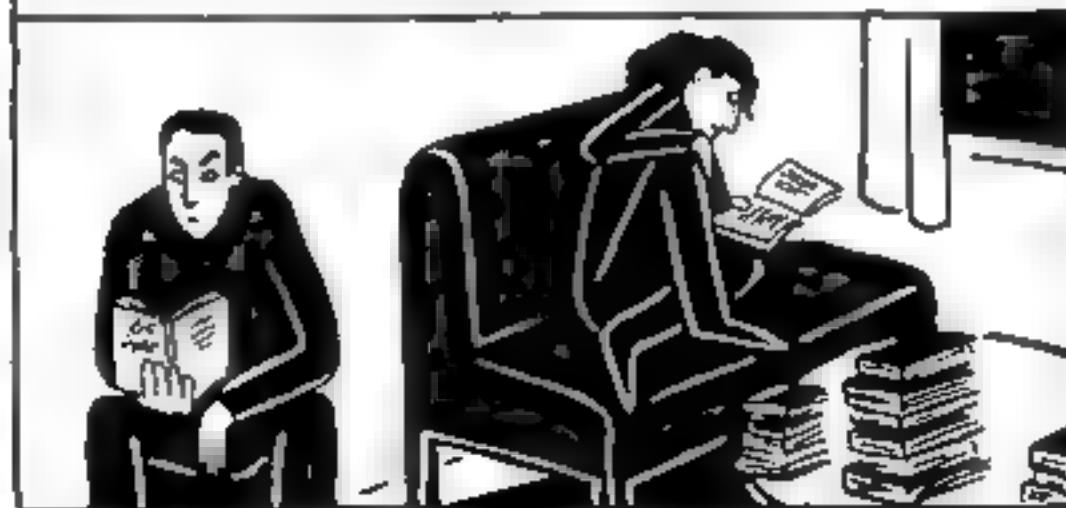


MAYBE SO BUT IN THE WEST YOU CAN COLLAPSE IN THE STREET AND NO ONE WILL GIVE YOU A HAND

DON'T WORRY! WE'LL FIND A SOLUTION!



HAPPILY, GETTING A VISA PROVED TO BE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT SO WE DECIDED TO STUDY FOR THE NATIONAL EXAM\* SO AS NOT TO WASTE YEARS OF OUR LIVES DOING NOTHING. IT WAS VERY HARD! IT HAD BEEN SIX YEARS SINCE REZA HAD GRADUATED HIGH SCHOOL HE WAS OUT OF PRACTICE FOR STUDYING. AS FOR ME, I HADN'T READ OR WRITTEN IN PERSIAN SINCE I WAS FOURTEEN.



\* IN IRAN, YOU CAN'T ENTER UNIVERSITY WITHOUT HAVING PASSED THE NATIONAL EXAM



JUNE 1989 AFTER TWO MONTHS OF HARD WORK, THE BIG DAY FINALLY ARRIVED.



THE CANDIDATES TOOK THE EXAMS IN DIFFERENT PLACES, ACCORDING TO THEIR SEX



THERE WERE QUESTIONNAIRES SPECIFIC TO EACH SECTION

TO GET INTO THE COLLEGE OF ART IN ADDITION TO THE OTHER TESTS, THERE WAS A DRAWING QUALIFICATION I WAS SURE THAT ONE OF THE SUBJECTS WOULD BE "THE MARTYRS," AND FOR GOOD REASON! SO I PRACTICED BY COPYING A PHOTO OF MICHELANGELO'S "LA PÉTA" ABOUT TWENTY TIMES ON THAT DAY I REPRODUCED IT BY PUTTING A BLACK CHADOR ON MARY'S HEAD, AN ARMY UNIFORM ON JESUS AND THEN I ADDED TWO TULIPS, SYMBOLS OF THE MARTYRS\* ON EITHER SIDE SO THERE WOULD BE NO CONFUSION



I WAS VERY PLEASED WITH MY DRAWING.

\*IT'S SAID THAT RED TULIPS GROW FROM THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS.



WE HAD TO WAIT SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE GETTING THE RESULTS IN THE "ETELAAT," WHICH DIDN'T COME OUT UNTIL 3 P.M. WE WERE IN FRONT OF THE KIOSKS AT 1.



\* NAME OF A NEWSPAPER



KNOWING THAT 40% OF THE PLACES WERE RESERVED FOR CHILDREN OF MARTYRS AND THOSE DISABLED BY THE WAR, THE SEATS WERE LIMITED IT WAS AN UNEXPECTED STROKE OF LUCK THAT WE BOTH PASSED THE NATIONAL EXAM.

SINCE WE WEREN'T MARRIED, WE COULDN'T KISS EACH OTHER IN PUBLIC, OR EVEN GIVE ONE ANOTHER A FRIENDLY HUG TO EXPRESS OUR EXTREME JOY WE RISKED IMPRISONMENT AND BEING WHIPPED SO WE GOT INTO THE CAR QUICKLY

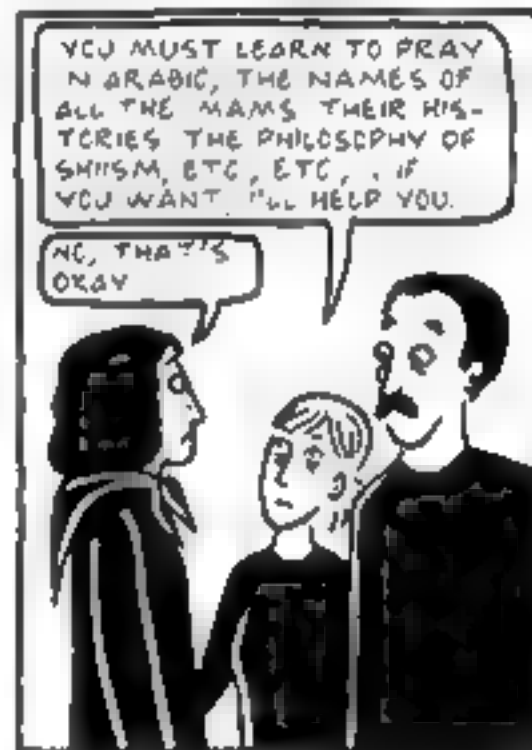


... WHERE HE PUT HIS HAND ON MINE.



IT WAS EXTRAORDINARY











# THE MAKEUP

OUR SUCCESS ON THE EXAM MADE REZA AND ME MORE CALM ABOUT OUR SHARED FUTURE. NOW WE WERE ABLE TO STAY TOGETHER BECAUSE NEITHER OF US WAS GOING TO LEAVE IRAN WITHOUT THE OTHER. FROM THEN ON, WE BECAME A REAL COUPLE, WHICH NATURALLY MEANT THAT WE BEGAN TO PICK ON EACH OTHER. I REPROACHED HIM FOR NOT BEING ACTIVE ENOUGH. HE CHOSE TO CRITICIZE MY PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: NOT ELEGANT ENOUGH, NOT MADE UP ENOUGH, ETC. ETC.,



AT THE TIME, I THOUGHT I SHOULD MAKE SOME EFFORTS. ONE DAY WHEN WE HAD A RENDEZVOUS IN FRONT OF THE SAVAFIEH BAZAAR,\* I ARRIVED VERY MADE-UP TO GIVE HIM A SURPRISE.



\* NAME OF A SHOPPING CENTER

SUDDENLY FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET, I SAW A CAR FULL OF GUARDANS OF THE REVOLUTION ARRIVE, FOLLOWED BY A BUS. WHEN THEY CAME WITH THE BUS IT MEANT A RAID.



IF THEY SEE ME WITH THIS LIPSTICK, THEY'LL TAKE ME AWAY

THIS CALLED FOR ACTION

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?



THAT'S IT! I'VE GOT IT!



I HAD TO DISTRACT THEM. I HAD TO GO SEE THEM BEFORE THEY SAW ME.



YES MY SISTER

THERE'S A GUY WHO SAID SOMETHING INDECENT TO ME

OH!



WHERE'S THE BASTARD? I'LL SHUT HIM UP ONCE AND FOR ALL!

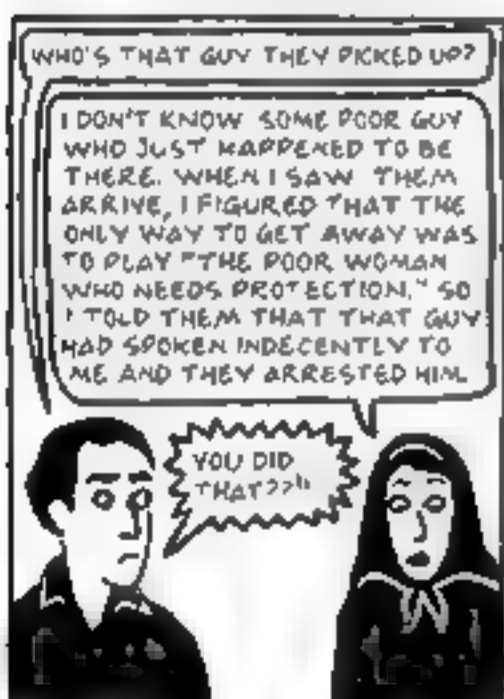
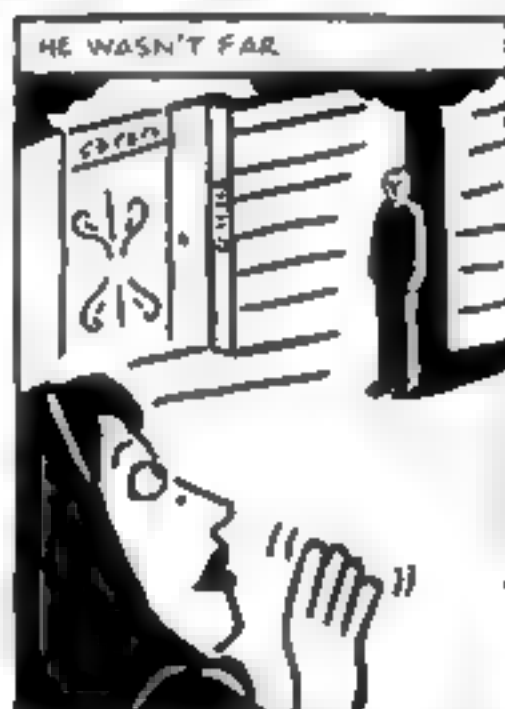
OVER THERE! ON THE STEPS! THAT'S HIM!













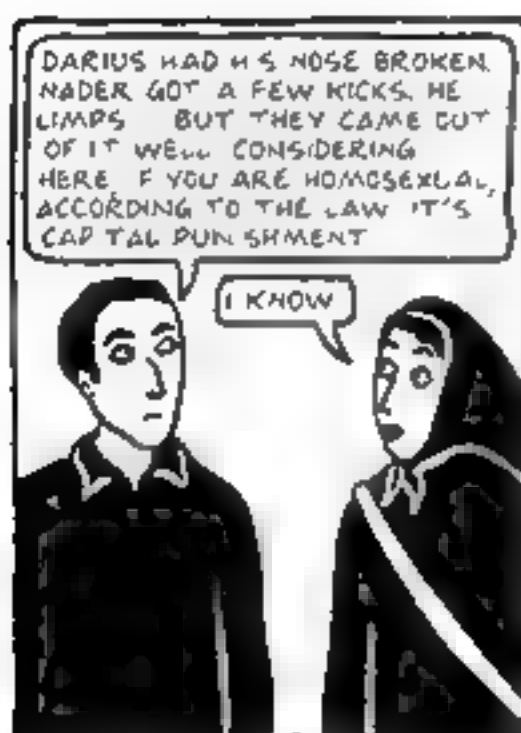


\*THE COMMISSARIAT OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE REVOLUTION  
 \*\*AT THE TIME, THE MONTHLY SALARY OF A GOVERNMENT WORKER







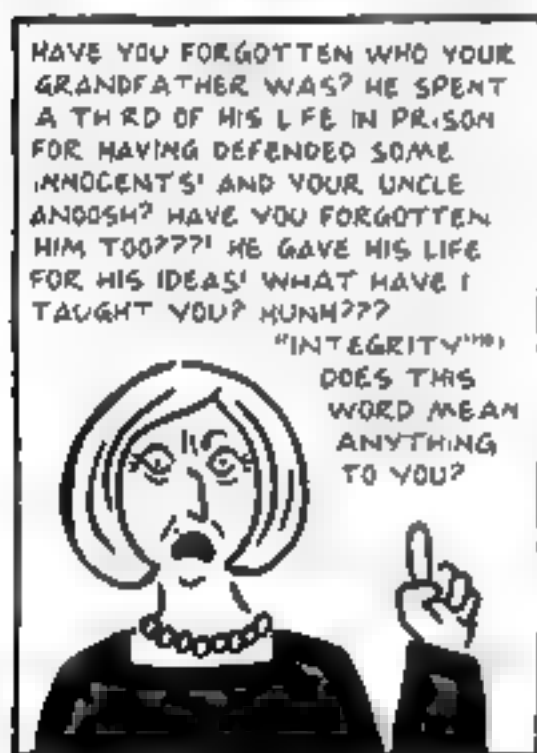


THE OUTSIDE BEING DANGEROUS WE OFTEN FOUND OURSELVES INSIDE AT HIS HOUSE OR AT MY HOUSE THIS SITUATION WAS SUFFOCATING ME



WE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE BUT CLOSE IN ON EACH OTHER









# THE CONVOCATION

SEPTEMBER 1989. I WAS FINALLY A STUDENT



THE BREAKFAST THAT MY MOTHER HAD PREPARED JUST LIKE SHE USED TO, THE MELANCHOLY ATMOSPHERE OF THE BEGINNING OF AUTUMN, MY UNIFORM. EVERYTHING REMINDED ME OF THE BEGINNING OF SCHOOL.



REZA FOUND ME ON THE WAY



DO YOU THINK THAT WE CAN TELL PEOPLE WE'RE TOGETHER?

ARE YOU CRAZY? NOT ON YOUR LIFE IF THE ADMINISTRATION DISCOVERS OUR RELATIONSHIP, WE'LL BE KICKED OUT! TO THEM, WE'RE BREAKING THE LAW



HE WAS EXAGGERATING A LITTLE FROM THE MOMENT WE ARRIVED AT UNIVERSITY, ALTHOUGH BOYS AND GIRLS DIDN'T MIX THIS DIDN'T STOP THEM FROM THROWING EACH OTHER FLIRTATIOUS LOOKS



NATURALLY AFTER ALL LAW OR NO LAW, THESE WERE HUMAN BEINGS.



MANY OF THE STUDENTS KNEW ONE ANOTHER ALREADY IN LISTENING TO THEM, I UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY'D TAKEN THE PREPARATORY CLASSES TOGETHER. OUR FIRST LESSON WAS "ART HISTORY"

WHAT IS GENERALLY KNOWN AS ARAB ART AND ARCHITECTURE SHOULD IN FACT BE CALLED THE ART OF THE ISLAMIC EMPIRE, WHICH STRETCHED FROM CHINA TO SPAIN. THIS ART IS A CROSS BETWEEN INDIAN, PERSIAN, AND MESOPOTAMIAN ART. THOSE WHOM WE CONSIDER, LIKE AVICENNA, TO BE "ARAB SCHOLARS" ARE FOR THE MOST PART ANYTHING BUT ARABS. EVEN THE FIRST BOOK OF ARABIC GRAMMAR WAS WRITTEN BY AN IRANIAN.



IT WAS FUNNY TO SEE TO WHAT EXTENT THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC WAS NOT ABLE TO PUT AN END TO OUR CHALVINISM. TO THE CONTRARY, PEOPLE OFTEN COMPARED THE OBSCURANTISM OF THE NEW REGIME TO THE ARAB INVASION. ACCORDING TO THIS LOGIC, "BEING PERSIAN" MEANT "NOT BEING A FANATIC" BUT THIS PARALLEL WENT ONLY SO FAR. CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT OUR GOVERNMENT WASN'T COMPOSED OF ARAB INVADERS BUT PERSIAN FUNDAMENTALISTS.

AT LUNCH TIME

THE PROFESSOR IS VERY INTERESTING, BUT OH MY! DOES HIS MOUTH SMELL EVEN THIRTY FEET AWAY YOU CAN SMELL HIS JACKAL'S BREATH!

AMONG THE GUYS, A FEW EVEN HAVE HAIR CUTS!! MY GOD!

HA! HA! HA!



DESPITE THEIR UPTIGHT APPEARANCE, THE GIRLS IN MY CLASS SEEMED TO BE QUITE THE COMEDIANS.

HEY LOOK, THE GUY IN THE BLUE SHIRT.. HE'S REALLY NOT BAD!



THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT REZA. I SUDDENLY FOUND THEM A LOT LESS FUNNY

HI, I'M SHOUKA.

AND I'M NIYDOSHA

NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M MARJANE.



NIYDOSHA HAD VERY GREEN EYES WHICH MADE HER THE MOST SOUGHT AFTER GIRL AT THE COLLEGE (THE MAJORITY OF IRANIANS HAVE BLACK EYES.)

YOU'VE LIVED ABROAD?

YES, HOW DID YOU KNOW?

BECAUSE OF YOUR MAGHNAEH\* YOU WEAR IT LIKE A BEGINNER.



SHOUKA WAS VERY FUNNY UNFORTUNATELY, WHEN SHE GOT MARRIED TWO YEARS LATER, HER HUSBAND FORBADE HER FROM ASSOCIATING WITH ME. TO HIM, I WAS AN AMCRAL PERSON.

\*HEADED HEAD- SCARF

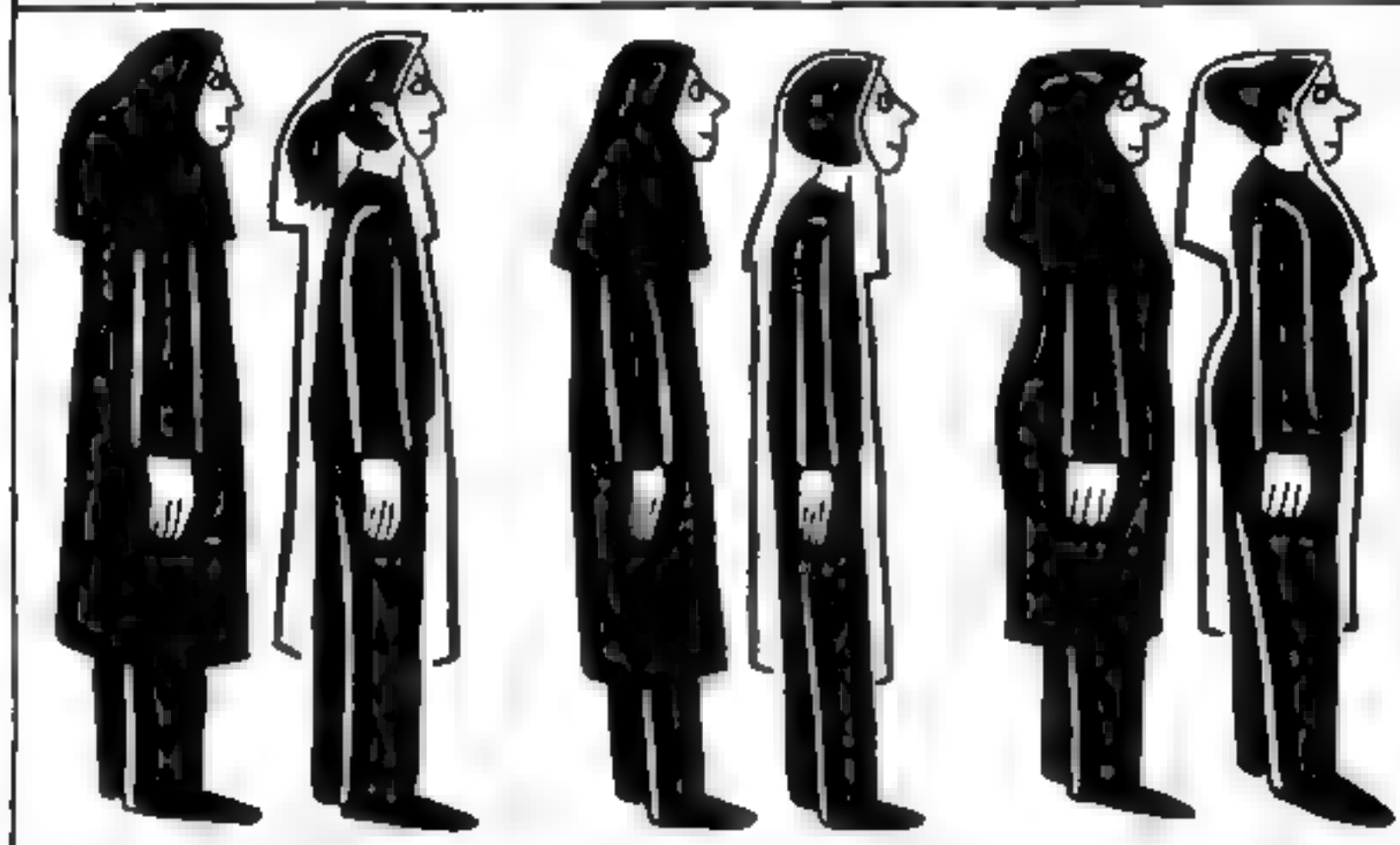
IT'S TRUE THAT WEARING THE VEIL WAS A REAL SCIENCE. YOU HAD TO MAKE A SPECIAL FOLD, LIKE THIS.



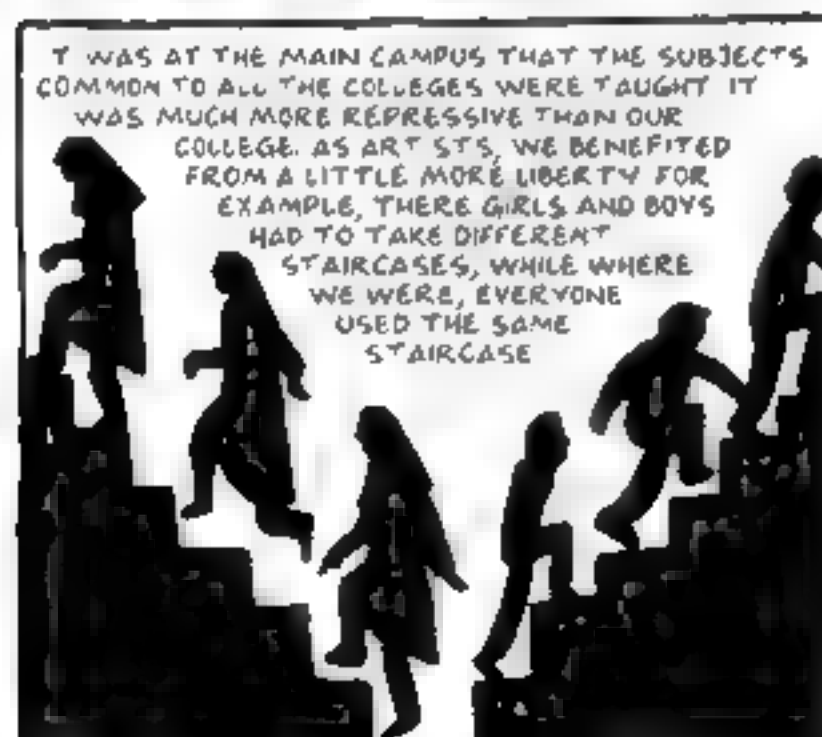
NEVERTHELESS, THINGS WERE EVOLVING YEAR BY YEAR. WOMEN WERE WINNING AN EIGHTH OF AN INCH OF HAIR AND LOSING AN EIGHTH OF AN INCH OF VEIL.



WITH PRACTICE, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE COVERED FROM HEAD TO FOOT, YOU GOT TO THE POINT WHERE YOU COULD GUESS THEIR SHAPE, THE WAY THEY WORE THEIR HAIR AND EVEN THEIR POLITICAL OPINIONS. OBVIOUSLY, THE MORE A WOMAN SHOWED, THE MORE PROGRESSIVE AND MODERN SHE WAS.







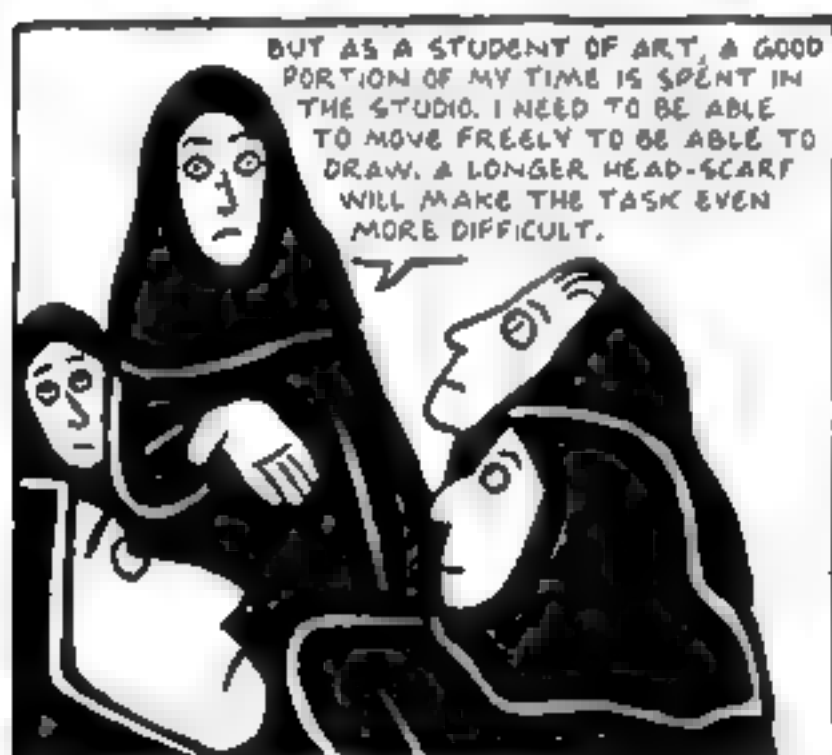


ONCE IN THE AMPHITHEATER WE DISCOVERED THE REASON FOR OUR CONVOCATION: THE ADMINISTRATION HAD ORGANIZED A LECTURE WITH THE THEME OF "MORAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDUCT," TO SHOW US THE RIGHT PATH

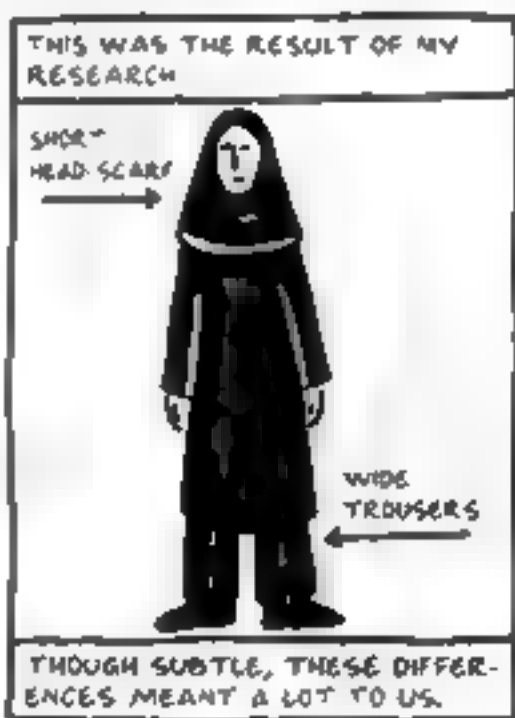
WE CAN'T ALLOW OURSELVES TO BEHAVE LOOSELY! IT'S THE BLOOD OF OUR MARTYRS WHICH HAS NOURISHED THE FLOWERS OF OUR REPUBLIC. TO ALLOW ONESELF TO BEHAVE INDECENTLY IS TO TRAMPLE ON THE BLOOD OF THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR OUR FREEDOM. ALSO I AM ASKING THE YOUNG LADIES PRESENT HERE TO WEAR LESS WIDE TROUSERS AND LONGER HEAD-SCARVES. YOU SHOULD COVER YOUR HAIR WELL. YOU SHOULD NOT WEAR MAKEUP, YOU SHOULD





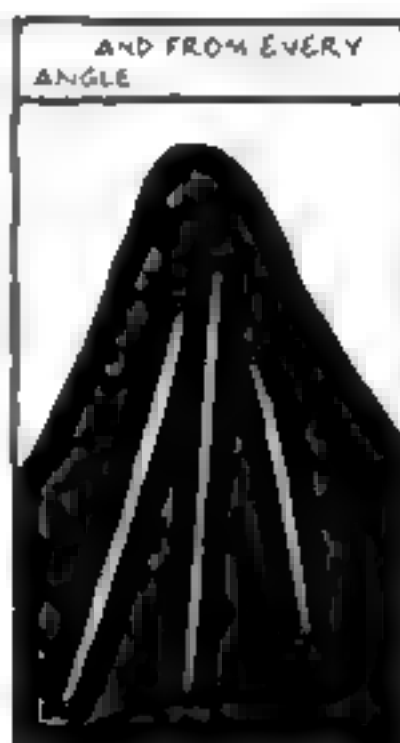






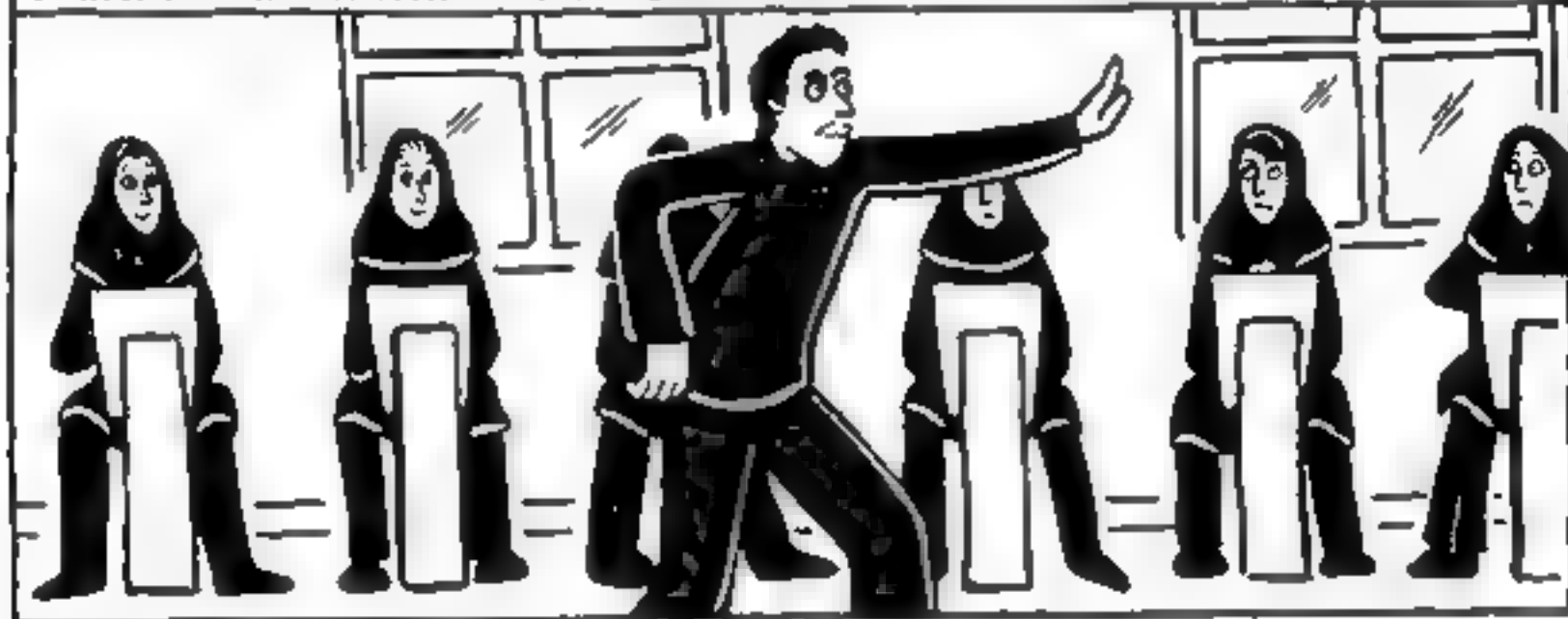


# THE SOCKS





AFTER A FEW WEEKS, WE DISCOVERED, ALONG WITH OUR PROFESSOR, THAT IT WAS PREFERABLE TO HAVE A MODEL ON WHOM YOU COULD AT LEAST DISTINGUISH THE LIMBS OUR DIRECTOR APPROVED.



ONE EVENING, BEFORE THE COLLEGE CLOSED, ONE OF THE SUPERVISORS PAID ME A VISIT



WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT THIS MAN?



YES, BUT YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO LOOK AT HIM. IT'S AGAINST THE MORAL CODE



WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO? SHOULD I DRAW THIS MAN WHILE LOOKING AT THE DOOR???





THESE ABSURD SITUATIONS WERE QUITE FREQUENT ONE DAY FOR EXAMPLE, I WAS SUPPOSED TO GO SEE MY DENTIST, BUT CLASSES FINISHED LATER THAN EXPECTED



SUDDENLY, I HEARD A VOICE OVER THE LOUDSPEAKER



THE LADY IN THE BLUE COAT! STOP RUNNING!



HEY-BLUE COAT! STOP RUNNING!



ME?



MADAM WHY WERE YOU RUNNING?

I'M VERY LATE I WAS RUNNING TO CATCH MY BUS.



YES BUT WHEN YOU RUN, YOUR BEHIND MAKES MOVEMENTS THAT ARE HOW DO YOU SAY 'OBSCENE'!



WELL THEN DON'T LOOK AT MY ASS!



I YELLED SO LOUDLY THAT THEY DIDN'T EVEN ARREST ME









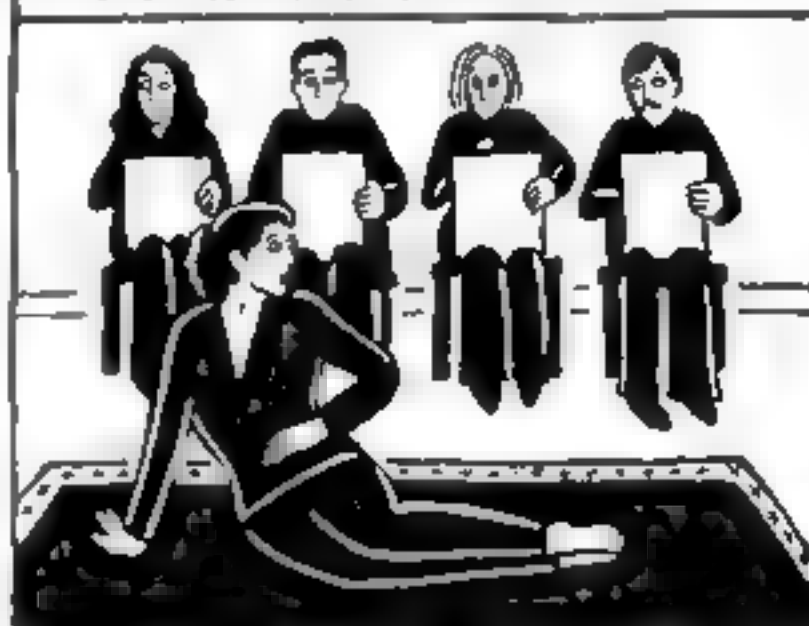
I DIDN'T SAY EVERYTHING I COULD HAVE THAT SHE WAS FRUSTRATED BECAUSE SHE WAS STILL A VIRGIN AT TWENTY SEVEN! THAT SHE WAS FORBIDDING ME WHAT WAS FORBIDDEN TO HER! THAT TO MARRY SOMEONE THAT YOU DON'T KNOW, FOR HIS MONEY, IS PROSTITUTION. THAT DESPITE HER LOCKS OF HAIR AND HER LIPSTICK SHE WAS ACTING LIKE THE STATE. THAT ETC THAT DAY, HALF THE CLASS TURNED ITS BACK ON ME.



HAPPILY, THERE WAS STILL THE OTHER HALF  
LITTLE BY LITTLE, GOT TO KNOW THE  
STUDENTS WHO THOUGHT LIKE ME.



WE WOULD GO TO ONE ANOTHER'S HOUSES,  
WHERE WE POSED FOR EACH OTHER. WE HAD  
AT LAST FOUND A PLACE OF FREEDOM.



AT FIRST THERE WERE ONLY  
FIVE OF US.



THEN



AND FINALLY



WE WERE MUCH MORE NUMEROUS  
- THAN I WOULD HAVE BELIEVED

OUR PROFESSOR WAS SO HAPPY TO  
SEE THE SKETCHES WE DID AT HOME

BRAVE AN ARTIST SHOULD DEFY  
THE LAW! I CAN  
GRATULATE YOU



THE MORE - WE PASSED THE MORE I BECAME CONSCIOUS OF THE CONTRAST  
BE-TWEEN THE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION OF MY COUNTRY AND THE  
REAL LIFE OF THE PEOPLE. THE ONE "HAD" WENT ON BEHIND THE WALLS





OUR BEHAVIOR IN PUBLIC AND OUR BEHAVIOR IN PRIVATE WERE POLAR OPPOSITES



"HIS DISPARITY MADE US SCHIZOPHRENIC"



TO FIND A SEMBLANCE OF EQUILIBRIUM, WE PARTIED ALMOST EVERY NIGHT



BUT EVEN IN OUR HOMES, THEY DIDN'T LEAVE US ALONE.

I SAW A PATROL OF GUARDIANS OF THE REVOLUTION OUT THE WINDOW! I THINK THEY'RE COMING TO ARREST US!



COME ALONG YOU LITTLE BASTARD! YOU'RE ORGANIZING PARTIES. LL CURE YOU OF YOUR TASTE FOR PLEASURE!



THEY CARTED EVERYONE OFF TO PRISON. OBVIOUSLY, WE WERE VERY SCARED THE FIRST TIME.

BUT WE QUICKLY GOT USED TO IT. WE WOULD EVEN ARRIVE LAUGHING.



THEN CAME THE USUAL SPIEL

AGAINST THE MORAL CODE THE BLOOD OF MARTYRS TWENTY THOUSAND TUMANS

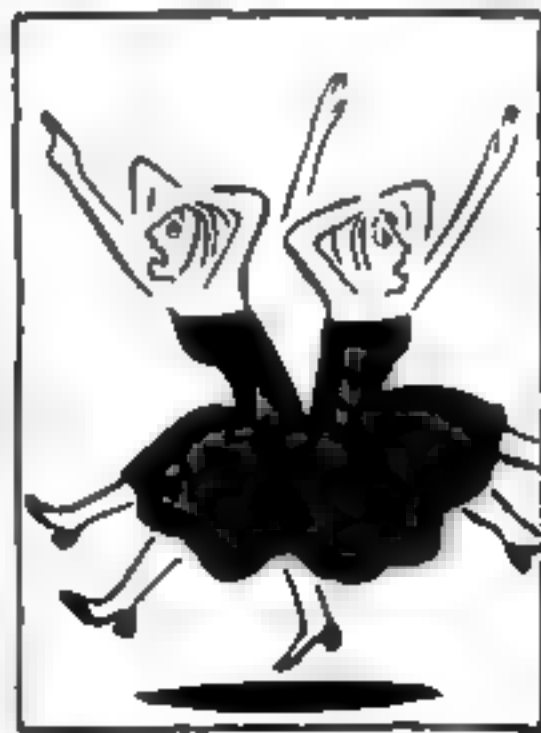
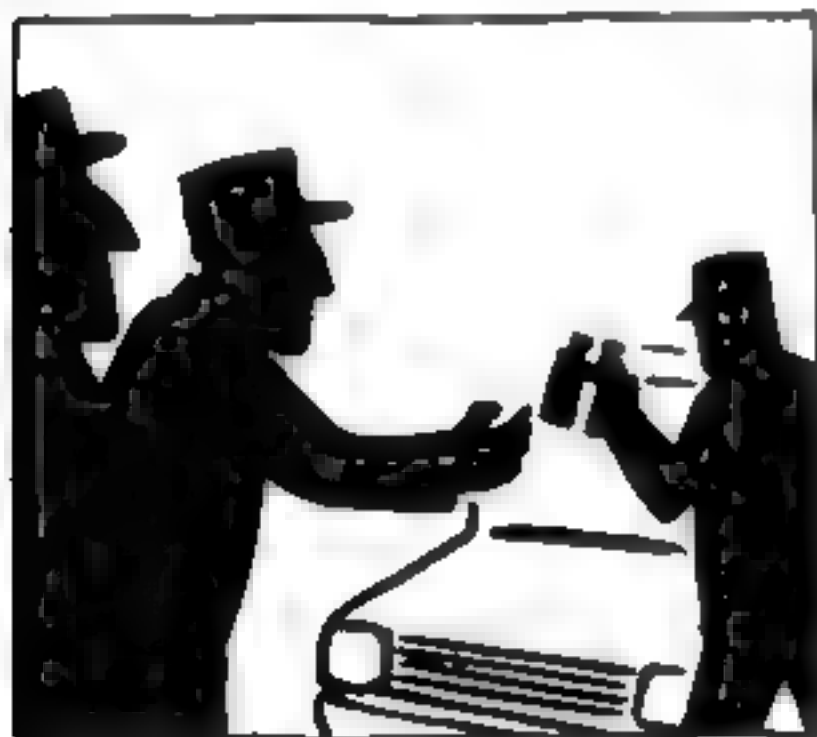


OUR PARENTS PAID AND WE WERE RELEASED

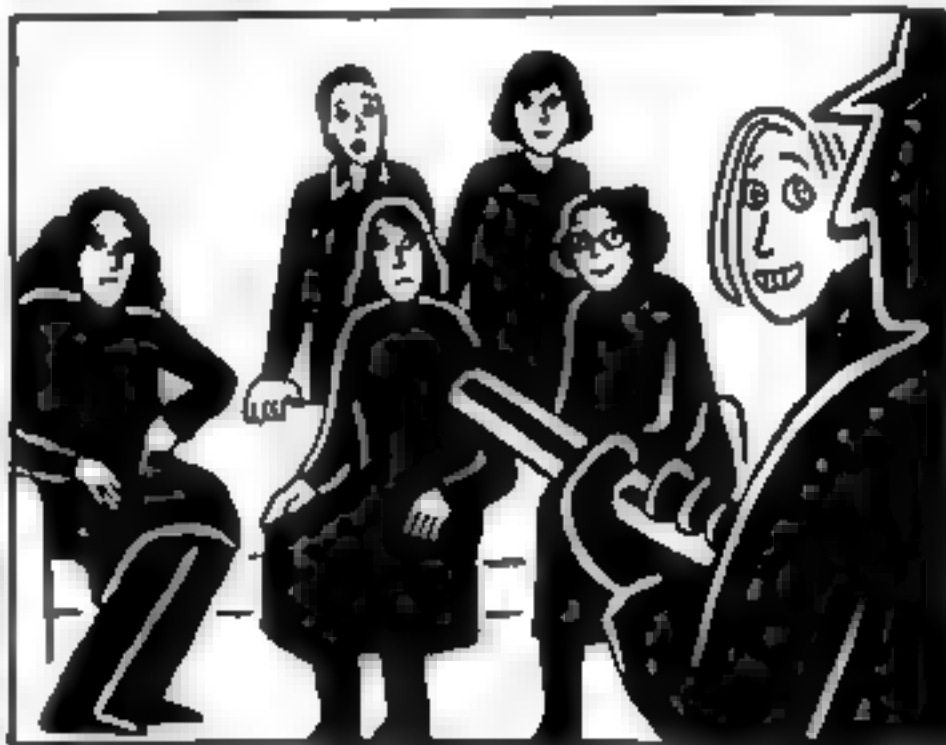


UNTIL THE NEXT TIME. TO BE ABLE TO PARTY, YOU HAD TO HAVE MEANS.

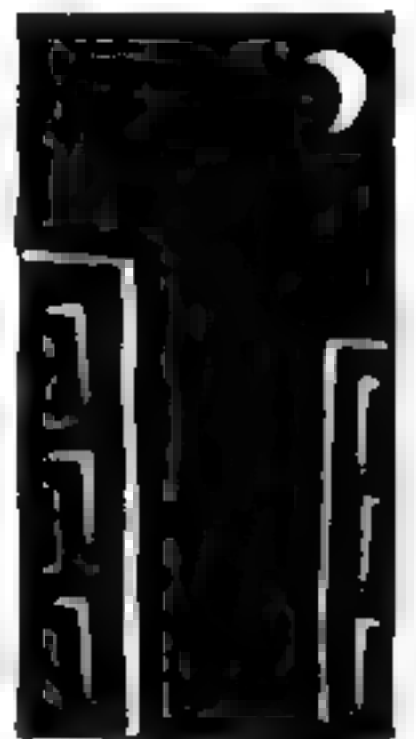
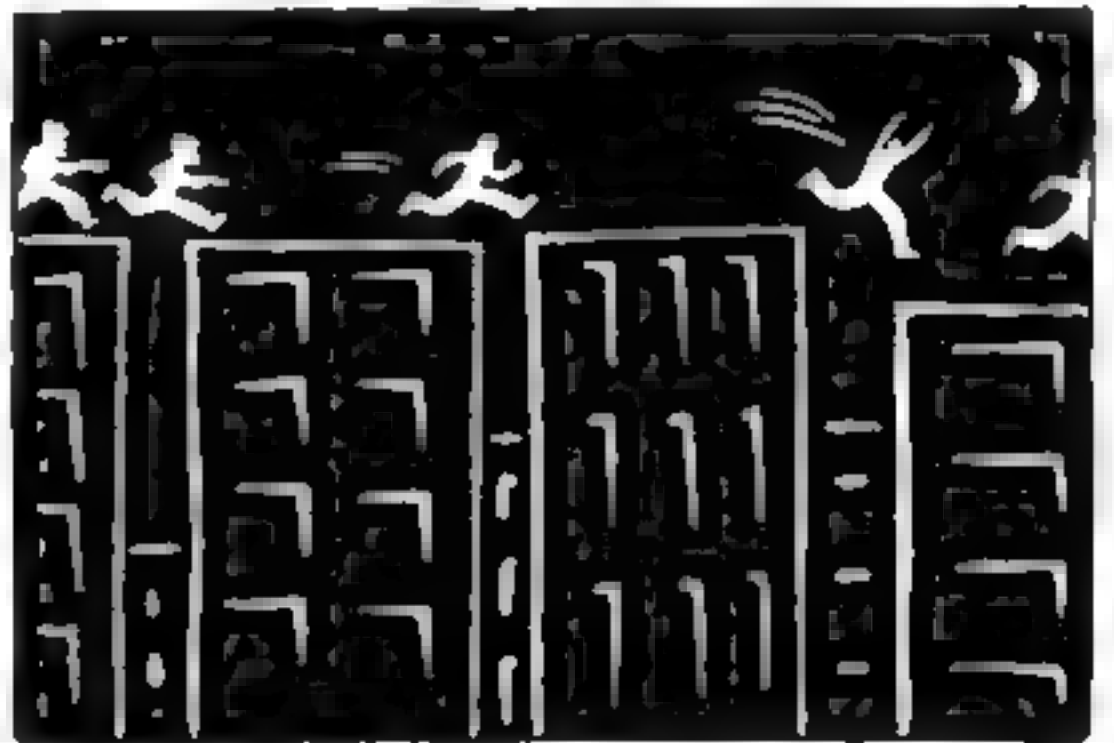






















# THE WEDDING





A FEW DAYS LATER, MY DECISION WAS MADE: I WAS GOING TO GET MARRIED. I ANNOUNCED IT TO MY FATHER. HE INVITED US, ME AND REZA, TO A RESTAURANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.

WELCOME!



AFTER DINNER.

AS YOUR FUTURE FATHER-IN-LAW, I'M TAKING THE LIBERTY OF ASKING YOU THREE THINGS.



FIRST: YOU ARE SURELY AWARE THAT IN THIS COUNTRY A WOMAN'S "RIGHT TO DIVORCE" IS NOT GUARANTEED. SHE ONLY HAS IT IF HER HUSBAND ALLOWS THIS OPTION DURING THE SIGNING OF THE MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE. MY DAUGHTER MUST ENJOY THIS RIGHT



SECOND: MY WIFE AND I HAVE RAISED OUR DAUGHTER WITH COMPLETE FREEDOM. IF SHE SPENDS HER WHOLE LIFE IN IRAN, SHE'LL WITHER. I'M THEREFORE ASKING THE BOTH OF YOU TO LEAVE TO CONTINUE YOUR STUDIES IN EUROPE AFTER YOUR DIPLOMA. YOU WILL HAVE MY FINANCIAL SUPPORT



THIRD: LIVE TOGETHER AS LONG AS YOU FEEL TRULY HAPPY. LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO BE LIVED BADLY



WAITER, THE CHECK, PLEASE!

YES, SIR



LONG AFTERWARD MY FATHER ADMITTED TO ME THAT HE HAD ALWAYS KNOWN THAT I WOULD GET DIVORCED. HE WANTED ME TO REALIZE BY MYSELF THAT REZA AND I WERE NOT MADE FOR EACH OTHER. HE WAS RIGHT



NEXT, I CALLED MY MOTHER AT MY AUNT'S HOUSE IN VANCOUVER.

HELLO, MOM! HOW ARE YOU?

MUCH BETTER NOW THAT I'VE HEARD YOUR VOICE!

MOM, I HAVE SOME VERY BIG NEWS TO TELL YOU. I'M GETTING MARRIED!

YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED? BUT TO WHOM??

WHO DO YOU THINK? TO REZA, OF COURSE!

BUT YOU ARE STILL TOO YOUNG! LISTEN! YOU WAIT UNTIL I GET BACK I'LL BE THERE IN THREE WEEKS WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT AGAIN THEN

WELL, SHE DOESN'T APPROVE

I HALF EXPECTED THAT. IT'S NOT SERIOUS. I'LL TALK TO HER. DON'T WORRY

I NEVER KNEW WHAT THEY SAID TO EACH OTHER, NEVERTHELESS WHEN MY MOTHER GOT BACK TO TEHRAN

OH MY DARLING, I'LL MAKE ALL THE ARRANGEMENTS. THIS CEREMONY MUST BE WORTHY OF YOU.







FIRST, WE WENT BEFORE THE MULLAH.

MR. REZA DO YOU TAKE MISS MARIANE  
MISS MARJANE DO YOU TAKE MR. REZA

YES!

YES!

THEN IT WAS FOLKLORE'S TURN.  
TRADITION REQUIRED THAT A  
HAPPILY MARRIED WOMAN RUB  
TWO SUGAR LOAVES ABOVE OUR  
HEADS TO PASS ON HER JOY  
AND PROSPERITY



TRADITION ALSO REQUIRED  
THAT WE PLUNGE OUR FINGERS  
IN HONEY



AND THAT WE SUCK ONE  
ANOTHER'S FINGERS TO BEGIN  
OUR MARRIED LIFE ON A SWEET  
NOTE



THEN CAME THE GIFTS

HERE, IT'S FOR YOU!

MOM!



SO, WHEN CAN WE  
EXPECT KIDS?

SOON.



YOU LOOK RADIANT!

THANK YOU!

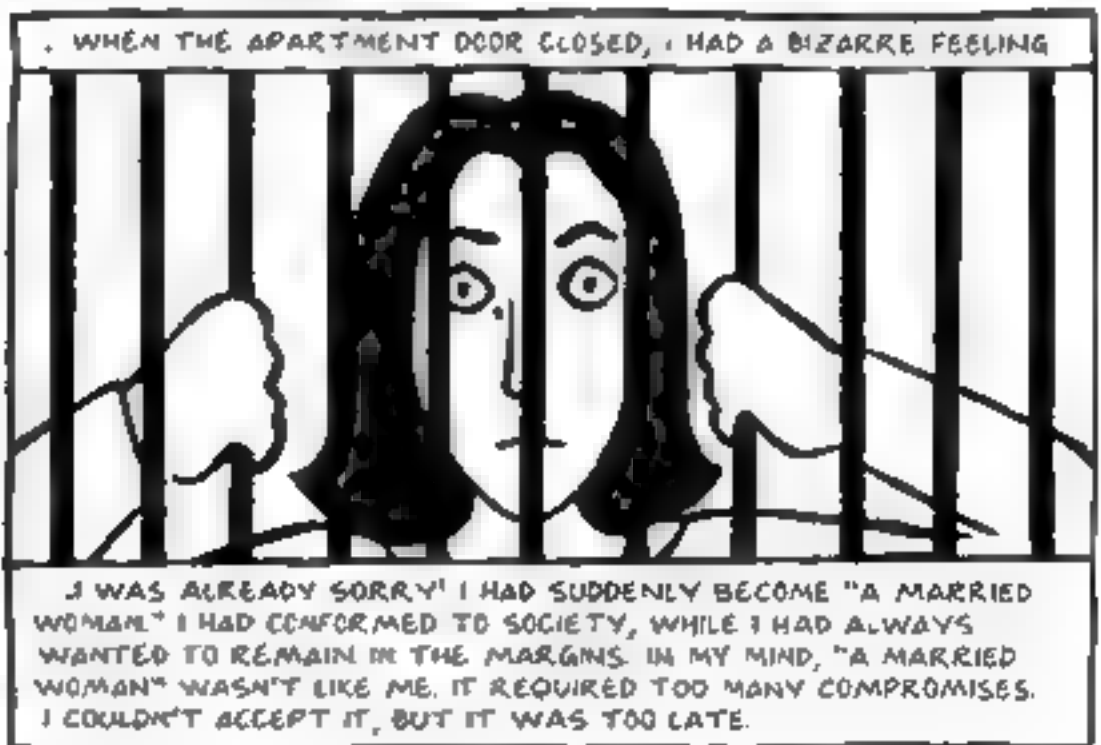


ARE YOU THE BRIDE?

HEE HEE HEE!  
NO, SHE IS!





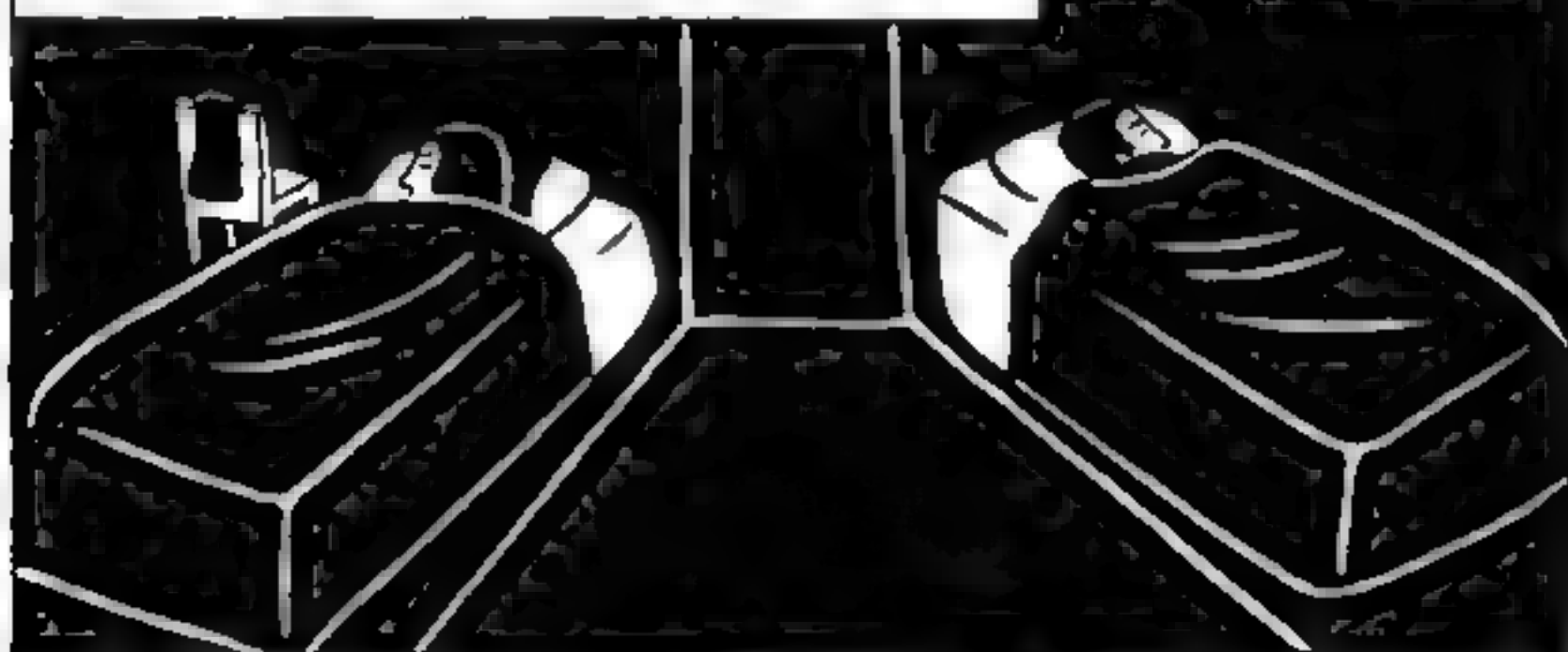








AFTER ONE MONTH OF MARRIAGE WE SET UP SEPARATE BEDROOMS.



HE HAD HIS LIFE

WHERE'S YOUR WIFE?

ON VACATION WITH HER COUSIN



AND I HAD MINE

AND REZA'S WELL?

YEAH, HE'S WITH HIS BROTHER



WE HAD BEEN CONSIDERED THE MODEL COUPLE FOR SO LONG AND BY SO MANY PEOPLE THAT WE WEREN'T ABLE TO ACCEPT OUR FAILURE

WE WERE KEEPING UP APPEARANCES IN PUBLIC

IS SHE GOING TO SHUT HER BIG MOUTH?

WHAT AN ASS



BUT AS SOON AS WE WERE ALONE

YOU NEVER WANT TO GO OUT? I HAVE TO GO EVERYWHERE ALONE. WHAT'S THE POINT OF LIVING TOGETHER?



I LET YOU DO WHATEVER YOU WANT! I'M NOT ONE OF THOSE MACHO MEN WHO EXPECTS YOU TO REPORT BACK! SO LEAVE ME ALONE!



IN THE SPACE OF TWO MONTHS WE WENT FROM WEEKLY FIGHTS TO DAILY INSULTS





# THE SATELLITE





ASIDE FROM THESE LITTLE DISAPPOINTMENTS, WE DIDN'T FEEL AT ALL CONCERNED ABOUT THE EVENTS, EVEN IF THEY WERE TAKING PLACE IN THE PERSIAN GULF, WHICH IS TO SAY, IN OUR BACKYARD!



THIS WAR HAS UNLEASHED A PANIC IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.



PEOPLE ARE FILLING THEIR SHOPPINGCARTS. IT'S LIKE A MADHOUSE IN WESTERN SUPERMARKETS.



HERE ARE SOME ACCOUNTS

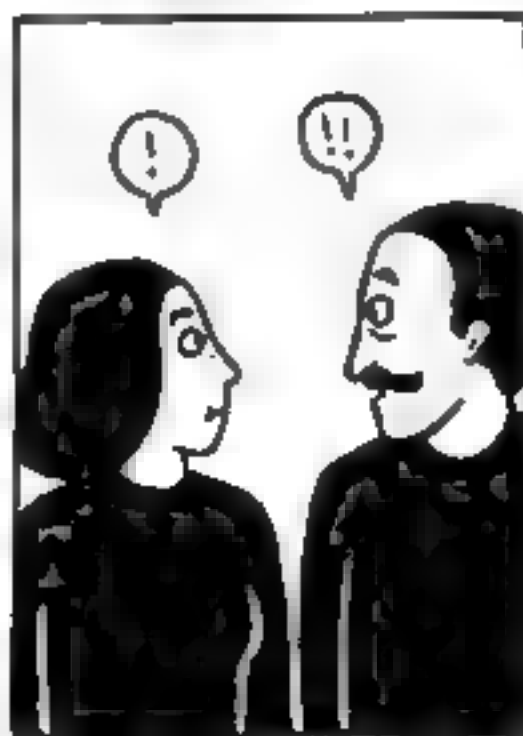
'I LIVED THROUGH THE SECOND WORLD WAR! IT WAS HORRIBLE!'



WE HAVE TWO BABIES! WE HAVE TO STOCK UP ON POWDERED MILK AND DIAPERS.



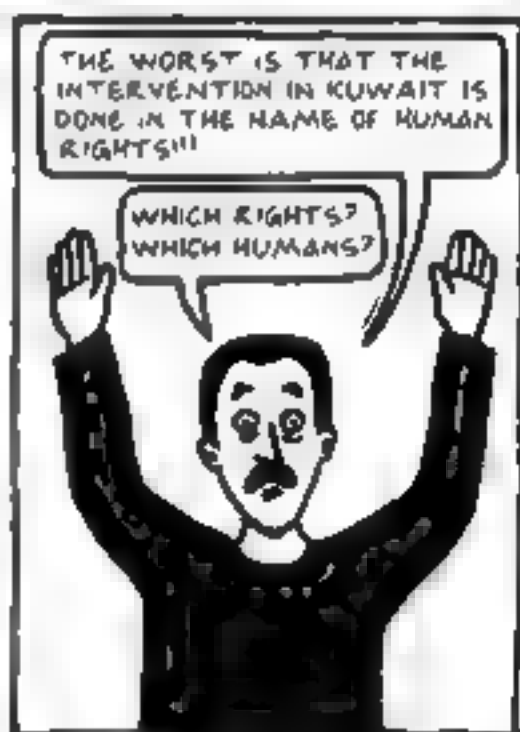
THERE ARE GOING TO BE ATTACKS! THEY'LL COUNTER-ATTACK! THEY'LL COME AFTER US ON OUR OWN TERRITORY!



HA! HA! HA!  
HA! HA! HA!









AT THE TIME, THIS KIND OF ANALYSIS WASN'T COMMONPLACE AFTER OUR OWN WAR WE WERE HAPPY THAT IRAQ GOT ITSELF ATTACKED AND DELIGHTED THAT IT WASN'T HAPPENING IN OUR COUNTRY

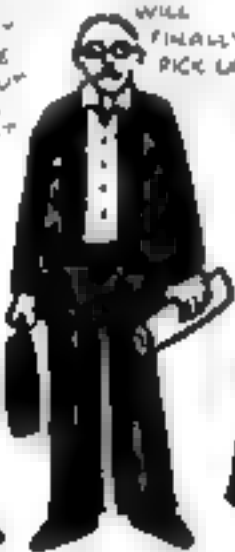
SADDAM STOLE MY  
LEG FROM ME. I HOPE  
THEY KILL  
HIM



THERE'S NO  
MORE WAR IN  
IRAN -  
DON'T  
CARE ABOUT  
THE REST



NOW OUR  
ECONOMY  
WILL  
FINALLY  
PICK UP



MY HUSBAND IS A  
WAR MARTYR  
I HOPE  
SADDAM  
GOES TO HELL



I'LL DO MY  
MILITARY SER-  
VICE IN  
PEACE-  
TIME



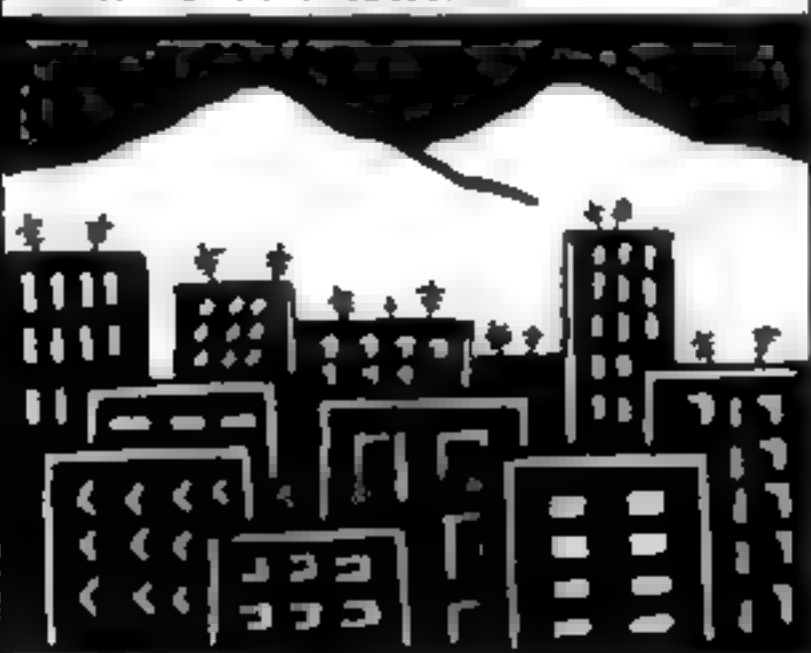
I HAVE A HEART  
CONDITION  
HAPPILY WE'RE  
THROUGH  
WITH  
BOMBS



DOWN WITH  
SADDAM!



WE WERE FINALLY ABLE TO SLEEP PEACEFULLY  
WITHOUT FEAR OF MISSILES.



WE NO LONGER NEEDED TO LINE UP WITH OUR  
FOOD RATION COUPONS



AND THEN, THERE  
WASN'T ANY MORE  
OPPOSITION. THE  
PROTESTERS HAD  
BEEN EXECUTED



OR HAD FLED THE  
COUNTRY ANY WAY  
POSSIBLE



THE REGIME HAD ABSOLUTE POWER



AND MOST PEOPLE, IN SEARCH OF A CLOUD OF  
HAPPINESS, HAD FORGOTTEN THEIR POLITICAL CONSCIENCE



I WASN'T ANY DIFFERENT FROM THEM ASIDE FROM THE TIME I SPENT WITH MY PARENTS. I LIVED FROM DAY TO DAY WITHOUT ASKING MYSELF ANY QUESTIONS. NEVERTHELESS, IN JANUARY 1992, A BIG EVENT OCCURRED

THAT WAS FARIBORZ ON THE TELEPHONE. HE JUST INSTALLED A SATELLITE ANTENNA AT HIS HOUSE!



THE SATELLITE ANTENNA WAS SYNONYMOUS WITH THE OPENING UP OF THE REST OF THE WORLD.



WE COULD FINALLY EXPERIENCE A VIEW DIFFERENT FROM THE ONE DICTATED BY OUR GOVERNMENT

LOOK AT THIS ONE! HE'S SO IMPATIENT THAT HE DIDN'T EVEN SAY HELLO!

WHERE IS THIS ANTENNA?



WE SPENT THE ENTIRE DAY AT FARIBORZ'S WATCHING MTV AND EUROSPORT

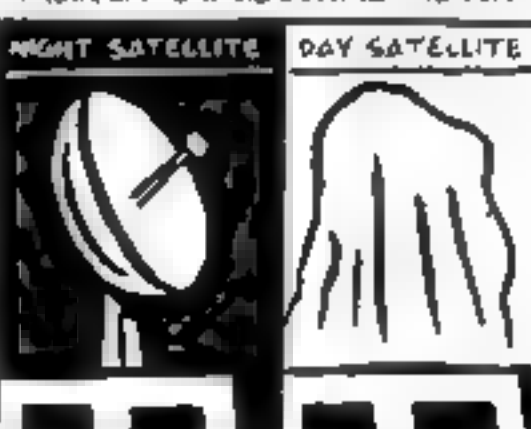


BY THE END OF THE EVENING, OUR MINDS WERE MUCH BROADER!

SOON THIS DEVICE DECORATED THE ROOFS OF ALL THE BUILDINGS IN THE NORTH OF TEHRAN



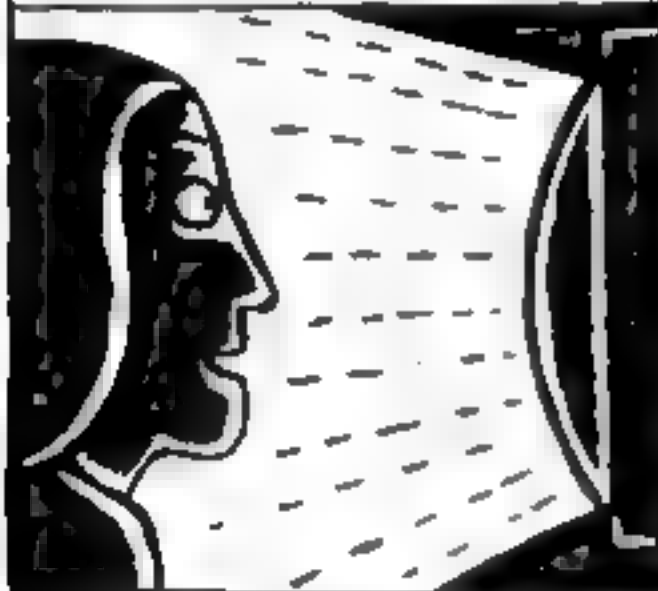
THE REGIME BECAME AWARE THAT THIS NEW PHENOMENON WAS WORKING AGAINST THEIR INDOCTRINATION. IT THEREFORE DECREED A BAN, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. PEOPLE WHO HAD TASTED IMAGES OTHER THAN THOSE OF BEARDED MEN RESISTED BY HIDING THEIR ANTENNAS DURING THE DAY



THE CHIC NEIGHBORHOODS



MY PARENTS PROCURED ONE FOR THEMSELVES, TOO. FROM THEN ON I SPENT WHOLE DAYS AND NIGHTS AT THEIR HOUSE WATCHING TV.



THE PROGRAM DIDN'T MATTER FROM THE MOMENT THERE WERE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE, I WAS HAPPY ONE NIGHT



"H! ARE YOU STILL HERE?  
WHERE'S YOUR MOTHER?"

WITH HER FRIENDS

THAT BASTARD HE ESCAPED UNSLATCHED AGAIN!



LISTEN WE  
NEED TO TALK

WAIT, WAIT,  
THEY'RE  
GOING TO  
ARREST HIM!



NO WE'RE  
GOING TO  
TALK FIRST

BUT  
WHAT'S  
GET INTO  
YOU??



THIS MORNING WHEN I LEFT  
FOR WORK, YOU WERE ON THE  
SOFA I COME HOME TWELVE  
HOURS LATER, AND YOU ARE  
STILL IN THE SAME PLACE



WHAT'S GOING ON? IS IT YOUR  
MARRIAGE THAT'S MAKING YOU  
DEPRESSED? I DON'T RECOGNIZE  
YOU ANYMORE! YOU WERE ALWAYS  
CURIOUS YOU READ, YOU WERE  
INTERESTED IN EVERYTHING!  
YOU WERE ALWAYS AHEAD OF  
YOUR YEARS. NOW



NOW I AM A MARRIED  
WOMAN. I'M TWENTY-TWO.  
I'M AN ADULT!

ANYONE CAN  
BE TWENTY-  
TWO AND BE  
MARRIED IT  
DOESN'T  
REQUIRE AN  
EXCEPTIONAL  
INTELLECTUAL  
EFFORT!  
YOU WOULD  
BE BETTER  
OFF THINKING  
ABOUT GET-  
TING YOUR  
DIPLOMA  
IT'S IN LESS  
THAN A  
YEAR



IF THAT'S HOW IT  
IS I'M GETTING  
OUT OF HERE!

GOODBYE  
THEN.



MY FATHER WAS RIGHT ANYONE COULD GET MARRIED. IN FACT, EVERYONE WAS GETTING MARRIED. THERE WERE THOSE WHO WERE MARRYING IRANIANS IN AMERICA IN THE HOPES OF ONE DAY BECOMING ACTRESSES IN HOLLYWOOD,



THOSE WHO WERE JOINING THEMSELVES TO RICH OLD MEN,



LUCKIER ONES WITH RICH YOUNG MEN,



THERE WERE ALSO SOME REAL LOVE STORIES, LIKE THAT OF NIVDOOSHA AND ALI.



.. AND THEN THERE WAS REZA AND ME.



AS FOR THE SINGLE ONES, THEY WERE WAITING THEIR TURN:

RIGHT NOW, I HAVE THREE CANDIDATES ONE IS A DOCTOR BUT HE LIVES IN IRAN, THE OTHER LIVES IN LOS ANGELES BUT HE'S SUPER UGLY AND THE THIRD IS VERY HANDSOME BUT POOR



MY FATHER WAS SO RIGHT THAT THE NEXT DAY, I APOLOGIZED TO HIM.

DAD DO YOU STILL WANT TO TALK TO ME?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU I JUST WANTED TO SHAKE YOU A LITTLE.

I KNOW, DAD. I REACTED VIOLENTLY BECAUSE YOU HIT A NERVE



THEN HE RUSHED INTO THE LIBRARY AND CAME BACK WITH THREE BOOKS.

HERE, READ THESE THERE'S "THE SECRETS OF THE CIA," "FREEMASONRY IN IRAN" AND "THE MEMOIRS OF MOSSADEGH."

OH GREAT! COOL.



TO CATCH UP, I READ ALL OF THEM IN TEN DAYS. DESPITE MY ASSUMPTIONS, I FOUND THEM REALLY INTERESTING.

IRANIAN PR ME MINISTER HE NATIONALIZED THE OIL INDUSTRY IN 1954.



MY NEW SPHERES OF INTEREST BROUGHT ME INTO CONTACT WITH NEW PEOPLE, OFTEN MUCH OLDER THAN ME. AMONG THEM, A CERTAIN DR. M, AT WHOSE HOUSE ALL THE INTELLECTUALS GATHERED ON THE FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH.

IN A COUNTRY LIKE OURS, WITH AS MANY RESOURCES AS WE HAVE, IT'S NOT RIGHT THAT 70% OF THE POPULATION SHOULD LIVE BELOW THE POVERTY LINE!



IF MOSSADEGH HAD BEEN ABLE TO SEE OUT HIS PROJECT OF REFORM, IRAN WOULDN'T BE FINDING ITSELF IN THIS SITUATION TODAY.



IT'S THE ENGLISH AND THE AMERICANS' FAULT THEY'RE THE ONES WHO DEPOSED HIM BY ORGANIZING THE COUP D'ETAT IN 1953!



MAYBE, BUT WHAT DID WE DO TO STOP THEM? OUTSIDERS WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR ENDS WITHOUT CERTAIN IRANIAN TRAITORS! IF WE WANT TO RECONSTRUCT THIS COUNTRY, WE HAVE TO BEGIN BY ADMITTING

—  
MIS-  
DEEDS—



PUSHED BY MY PARENTS, ENCOURAGED BY DR. M AND HIS FRIENDS, AND ALSO A LITTLE THANKS TO MYSELF, I CHANGED MY LIFE.



ONCE AGAIN, I ARRIVED AT MY USUAL CONCLUSION: ONE MUST EDUCATE ONESELF





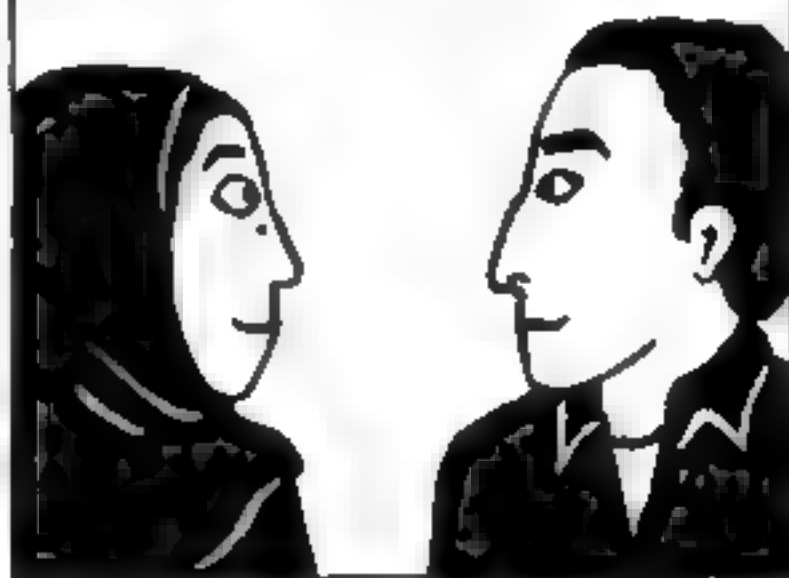
# THE END

IN JUNE 1993, AT THE END OF OUR FOURTH YEAR OF STUDY, REZA AND I WERE CALLED IN BY THE PROFESSOR WHO WAS HEAD OF THE VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

YOU ARE MY TWO BEST STUDENTS THEREFORE HAVE A FINAL PROJECT TO PREPARE TO YOU IT INVOLVES CREATING A THEME PARK BASED ON OUR MYTHOLOGICAL HERCES.



THE SUBJECT WAS SO EXTRAORDINARY THAT WE FORGOT OUR CONFLICTS AND AGREED TO WORK TOGETHER



WE SPENT THE WHOLE SUMMER IN LIBRARIES.



MUSEUMS, ...



WITH SCHOLARS RESEARCHERS AND DOCTORS IN THE HUMAN SCIENCES

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY, HERCES ARE PREDESTINED WHILE OUR MYTHOLOGY IS LACKING IN THE NOTION OF DESTINY



FROM JUNE 1993 TO JANUARY 1994 WE WERE SO BUSY THAT WE DIDN'T EVEN FIGHT ONCE





WE WANTED TO CREATE THE EQUIVALENT OF DISNEYLAND IN TEHRAN WE HAD THOUGHT OF ALL THE DETAILS DINING LODGING, ATTRACTIONS



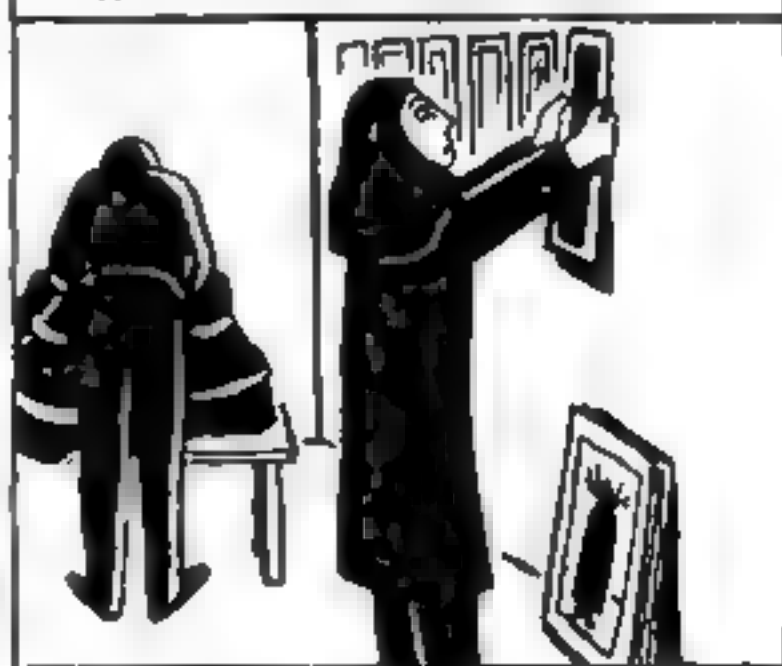
IT WAS EXCITING



WE WORKED NIGHT AND DAY FOR SEVEN MONTHS.



FINALLY CAME THE DAY OF GRADUATION.



BEFORE THE JURY ARRIVED, OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO APPRECIATE OUR WORK UP CLOSE.



DR. M, THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE 'M TRULY HONORED

THE HONOR IS MINE

SINCE I WAS A LOT MORE TALKATIVE THAN REZA, WE HAD DECIDED THAT I WOULD DEFEND OUR DISSERTATION.

OUR MYTHOLOGY IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPLEX MYTHOLOGIES ON EARTH, BUT WE HAVE NEVER KNOWN HOW TO MINE IT, FOR FEAR OF MAKING IT VULGAR. MANY THINGS, LIKE THE HOLY GRAIL, THE KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE, ETC, ETC, COME FROM IRAN. IN OUR COUNTRY WE HAVE THEME PARKS, BUT THE MOTIFS ARE AMERICAN. WHICH IS THE REASON BEHIND OUR INITIATIVE.



WE GOT A TWENTY OUT OF TWENTY. AFTER THE DELIBERATION.

BRAVO, MY CHILDREN! IT WAS PERFECT! THANKS TO YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOU, I STILL HAVE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE OF IRAN. YOU SHOULD PROPOSE YOUR PROJECT TO THE MAYOR OF TEHRAN. I PERSONALLY KNOW THE MAYOR'S DEPUTY YOU CAN USE MY NAME.











\*GOLDEN PENS



THIS CONVERSATION WITH FARNAZ SHOOK ME, BUT I DIDN'T AGREE WITH HER SUGGESTIONS. I REALIZED SUDDENLY THAT I NO LONGER REALLY LOVED REZA. I HAD TO GET DIVORCED! I RUSHED HOME TO TELL HIM.



DON'T LET IT GET TO YOU! AFTER ALL, IT'S ONLY ONE PROJECT. WE'LL HAVE OTHERS!

I KNOW. I HAVE TO GO SEE GRANDMA.

GOOD IDEA! SHE'LL KNOW HOW TO COMFORT YOU.



TWENTY MINUTES LATER



DON'T YOU WANT TO TAKE OFF THAT PAIN-IN-THE-ASS OF A HOOD?? IT MAKES ME CLAUSTROPHOBIC!

GRANDMA, IT'S HORRIBLE!

WHAT IS IT THAT'S SO HORRIBLE?



I THINK I NO LONGER LOVE REZA, I THINK WE SHOULD SEPARATE.

THAT'S YOUR "HORRIBLE" THING? OH MY! YOU SCARED ME! I THOUGHT THAT SOMEONE HAD DIED!

YOU KNOW I HAVE A HEART CONDITION! ALL THESE TEARS FOR A DIVORCE?



LISTEN TO ME! I GOT ONE, FIFTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, AND LET ME TELL YOU THAT AT THE TIME, NO ONE ENDED THEIR MARRIAGE. BUT I ALWAYS TOLD MYSELF THAT I WOULD BE HAPPIER ALONE THAN WITH A SHIT MAKER!

YES, BUT



NO BUTS ABOUT IT! A FIRST MARRIAGE IS A DRY RUN FOR THE SECOND YOU'LL BE MORE SATISFIED THE NEXT TIME IN THE MEANTIME, IF YOU'RE CRYING SO MUCH, MAYBE IT MEANS THAT YOU STILL LOVE HIM! THERE'S NO REASON YOU HAVE TO TELL HIM EVERYTHING RIGHT AWAY. TAKE YOUR TIME, THINK ABOUT IT, AND THE DAY YOU DON'T WANT IT ANYMORE, YOU LEAVE HIM! WHEN A TOOTH IS ROTTEN, YOU HAVE TO PULL IT OUT!





I FOLLOWED MY GRANDMOTHER'S ADVICE. I WAITED. I FOUND A JOB AS AN ILLUSTRATOR AT AN ECONOMICS MAGAZINE.

EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL. THE RAPPORT WITH MY COLLEAGUES MADE ME FORGET THE REST

BUT TWO MONTHS LATER, IN MARCH 1994, AN ILLUSTRATOR MADE THE FOLLOWING DRAWING FOR AN ARTICLE ON IRANIAN SOCCER

\* ASSASSIN

THE GOVERNMENT COULDN'T TOLERATE A MULLAH BEING CALLED AN ASSASSIN. THEY THEREFORE ARRESTED THE ILLUSTRATOR IN QUESTION.

NO ONE KNEW WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM, BUT EVERYONE HAD HIS OWN THEORY.

WHATEVER THE CASE, FROM THAT MOMENT ON, ALL THE PRESS WAS EXAMINED WITH A MAGNIFYING GLASS.

A FEW DAYS LATER, WHEN I GOT TO WORK.

THE MAGAZINE CAME OUT YESTERDAY AND THEY WENT TO COLLECT HIM AT HIS HOUSE TODAY AT FIVE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING!

HIS DRAWING ILLUSTRATED AN ARTICLE ABOUT ALARM SYSTEMS TO PROTECT THE VILLAS IN THE NORTH OF TEHRAN AGAINST BURGLARIES.

BEHZAD HAD MADE THE MISTAKE OF DRAWING A BEARDED MAN.



BUT A FEW HAIRS NOT BEING ENOUGH TO CONDEMN HIM, HE WAS SET FREE AFTER TWO WEEKS. GHA, THE MAGAZINE'S GRAPHIC DESIGNER, AND I WENT TO VISIT HIM.



SO, WHAT HAPPENED? TELL US!

NOTHING! I EXPLAINED TO THEM THAT MY DESIGN CAME FROM A FAIRY TALE IN WHICH A PRINCESS LOVER CLIMBS INTO HER ROOM BY USING THE LONG HAIR OF HIS LOVED ONE AND, NOT BEING ABLE TO DRAW A WOMAN WITHOUT A VEIL, I HAD DRAWN A BEARDED MAN.



AT THAT, THEY STARTED TO YELL, SAYING THAT I WAS INSINUATING THAT BEARDED MEN WERE S SIES. I SWORE THAT THAT WASN'T IN ANY WAY MY INTENTION.



AND THEY BEAT ME UP ..I HAD BRUISES ALL OVER MY BODY. FINALLY, WELL... YOU PAY DEARLY FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THESE DAYS.



I'M GOING TO GET THE DOOR. I MUST BE MY WIFE. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK



HELLO, I'M MANDANA.

MARTANE, I'M VERY HAPPY TO MEET YOU.









ON OUR WAY BACK

TO THINK THAT HE WAS MY HERO FOR TWENTY DAYS! HIS WHOLE SPIEL ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, WHILE HE DIDN'T EVEN LET HIS WIFE SAY ONE WORD! AH, IRANIAN MEN!

DON'T SAY THAT! IT'S NOT IRANIAN MEN BUT MEN. PERIOD TWO YEARS AGO I WAS GOING OUT WITH A SPANISH DIPLOMAT ON THE SURFACE, HE BEHAVED BETTER, BUT DEEP DOWN, IT WAS THE SAME THING.

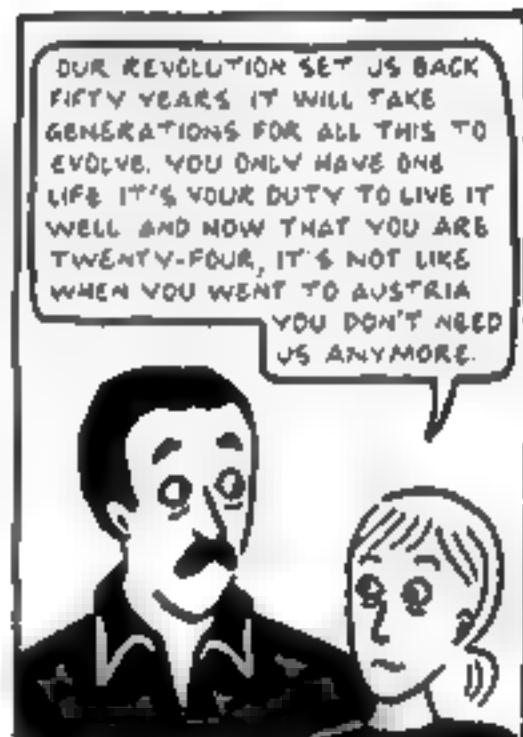
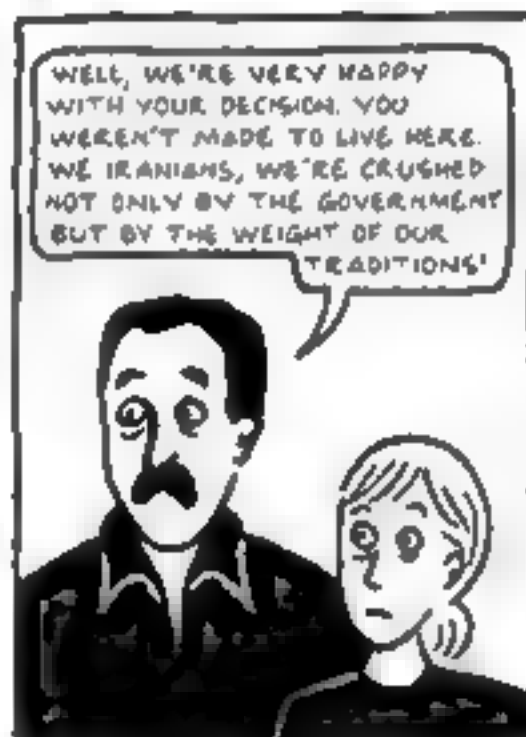
EXCEPT HERE ALL THE LAWS ARE ON THEIR SIDE!

IF A GUY KILLS TEN WOMEN IN THE PRESENCE OF FIFTEEN OTHERS, NO ONE CAN CONDEMN HIM BECAUSE IN A MURDER CASE, WE WOMEN, WE CAN'T EVEN TESTIFY! HE'S ALSO THE ONE WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO DIVORCE AND EVEN IF HE GIVES IT TO YOU HE NONETHELESS HAS CUSTODY OF THE CHILDREN! I HEARD A RELIGIOUS MAN JUSTIFY THIS LAW BY SAYING THAT MAN WAS THE GRAIN AND WOMAN, THE EARTH IN WHICH THE GRAIN GREW, THEREFORE THE CHILD NATURALLY BELONGED TO HIS FATHER. DO YOU REALIZE?? I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE. I WANT TO LEAVE THIS COUNTRY!











BETWEEN JUNE AND SEPTEMBER '94, THE DATE OF MY DEFINITIVE DEPARTURE, I SPENT EVERY MORNING WANDERING IN THE MOUNTAINS OF TEHRAN, WHERE I MEMORIZED EVERY CORNER.



I WENT ON A TRIP WITH MY GRANDMA TO THE SHORE OF THE CASPIAN SEA, WHERE I FILLED MY LUNGS WITH THAT VERY SPECIAL AIR. THAT AIR THAT DOESN'T EXIST ANYWHERE ELSE.



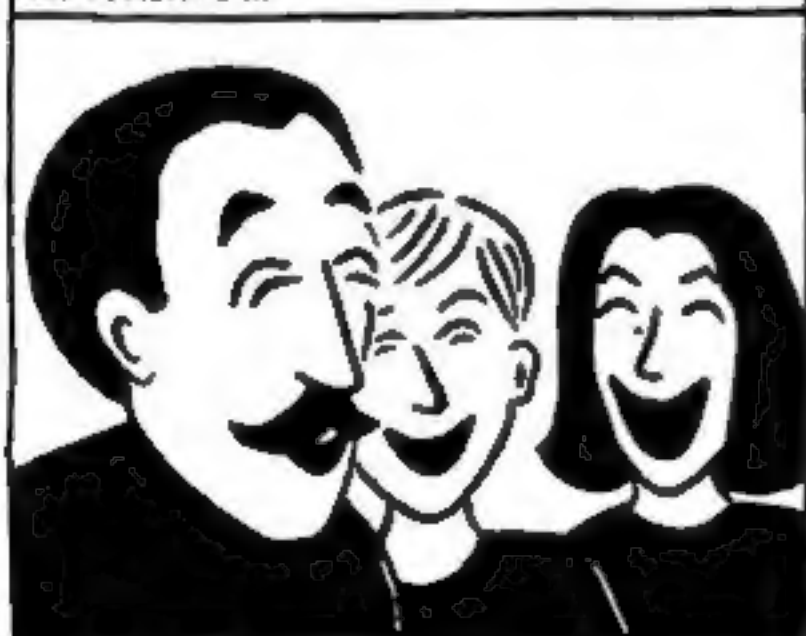
I WENT TO MY GRANDFATHER'S TOMB, WHERE I PROMISED HIM THAT HE WOULD BE PROUD OF ME.



I ALSO WENT BEHIND THE EVINE PRISON WHERE THE BODY OF MY UNCLE ANDOSH LAY IN AN UNMARKED GRAVE, NEXT TO THOUSANDS OF OTHER CADAVERS. I GAVE HIM MY WORD TO TRY TO REMAIN AS HONEST AS POSSIBLE.



I ALSO SPENT SOME WONDERFUL MOMENTS WITH MY PARENTS ...



... UNTIL SEPTEMBER 9, 1994, WHEN, ALONG WITH MY GRANDMA, THEY ACCOMPANIED ME TO MEHRABAD AIRPORT.





I HAD CHOSEN THIS DEPARTURE BUT DESPITE EVERYTHING, I FELT VERY SAD.



MY FATHER CRIED AS USUAL,



AND MY MOTHER KEPT HER HEAD.

THIS TIME, YOU'RE LEAVING FOR GOOD. YOU ARE A FREE WOMAN. THE IRAN OF TODAY IS NOT FOR YOU. I FORBID YOU TO COME BACK!

YES, MOM.



THE GOODBYES WERE MUCH LESS PAINFUL THAN TEN YEARS BEFORE WHEN I EMBARKED FOR AUSTRIA: THERE WAS NO LONGER A WAR, I WAS NO LONGER A CHILD, MY MOTHER DIDN'T FAINT AND MY GRANDMA WAS THERE, HAPPILY...



... HAPPILY, BECAUSE SINCE THE NIGHT OF SEPTEMBER 9, 1994, I ONLY SAW HER AGAIN ONCE, DURING THE IRANIAN NEW YEAR IN MARCH 1995. SHE DIED JANUARY 4, 1996 ... FREEDOM HAD A PRICE ...







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